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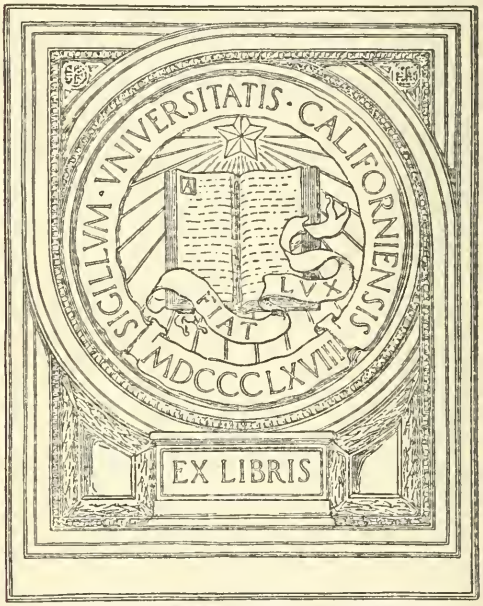
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Arthur W. Pinero.

ARTHUR WING PINERO

PLAYWRIGHT

A Study

BY

H. HAMILTON FYFE

London

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1902

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ARTHUR WING PINERO

I

INTRODUCTORY

If any apology is required in behalf of this little book, it must be an apology not so much to its readers as to him who is the subject of it. Criticism is seldom apologetic, and yet, as it seems to me, it always ought to include at least a veiled petition that the critic may be absolved from the faults of hasty judgment and distorted vision. To make anything is hard, and, in proportion, meritorious. To rail at that which has been made, to note with lofty scorn its imperfections, to lose sight of its finer qualities, is lamentably easy, and, in pro-

portion, contemptible. If, therefore, in these pages I should seem here and there to insist, with emphasis, upon a personal view, to lay bare a cavilling disposition, or to discourse with overmuch assurance, I beg pardon in advance. The opinions expressed, the impressions recorded, are but the fruitage of a single mind. They have one desert which I may claim for them without loss of modesty—they are genuine and frank and honest. Assail my judgment if you will. But so you admit that it is an honest judgment, I shall be content.

If appreciations are permitted of the work of living writers of books, much more should room be found for a study of a playwright's labours. For in the present state of our theatre in England it is exceedingly difficult to form any judgment of a dramatist's work at all. A book you may read at any time, but you can only see a play acted when it pleases a theatrical

manager to stage it. It is true that Mr Pinero has printed and published the dramas on which he desires his reputation to stand or fall, but the reading of plays is a habit which the public has not yet formed. I am not without hope, therefore, that this book may be found useful by many who value highly what they have seen of Mr Pinero's dramaturgy, but who have lacked opportunity to gain a full acquaintance with the whole body of it. It may stimulate their interest, it may perchance create a fresh interest. If it turns attention to the published plays (which are issued in a handy and attractive shape by Mr Heinemann) and persuades people to read and form their own judgment upon them, it will have served its purpose. There is no doubt that, granted a taste for the dramatic form of story-telling, their judgment will be warmly favourable. The talents which equip Mr Pinero for the task of writing plays would set up at least half

a dozen average novelists, and had he chosen to throw his work into the form of novels instead of plays, he would certainly have won an undisputed reputation as a man of letters. That this title is not universally conceded to him, as things are, is a result of the muddle-headed view which is generally accepted in respect of plays claiming to rank as literature. Uncritical critics are too ready to declare any play "literary" if its author has introduced into his dialogue such scraps of "fine" and "flowery" writing as any tyro, if he followed a sound and well-known maxim, would at once cut out. This, of course, is merely the point of view of persons ignorant both of what is implied when proper use is made of the word "literary" and of the elements of dramatic composition. But there are many people of wider intelligence who are in doubt as to the essentials of a play that may justly be lifted out of the ruck of pieces endur-

able only as acting dramas and granted the right to this much-coveted and much-talked-about term.

The essential distinction, to my mind, can be stated in some such way as this. A skilfully-contrived play may appeal strongly to the emotions and enforce interest in its developments in spite of weaknesses and even absurdities that become apparent as soon as the curtain has fallen—as soon as it is considered in any other light than that of an entertainment calculated solely to keep an audience amused and interested for the brief space of two or three hours. Judged from this standpoint, by the verdict of the majority, a Drury Lane melodrama or a play like *The Bells* may equal in merit the most brilliant efforts of Congreve and Sheridan, the wittiest comedy of Molière or Dumas *fils*, the most poetical or the most pregnant even of the plays of Shakespeare himself. But the reason why the works of these

writers have come to be regarded as great achievements in literature as well as excellent stage plays lies in the fact that they will bear the closest scrutiny, the most severely critical consideration in the study; that their pages glow with poetry, with imagination, with wit and fancy, with a wide knowledge of human character and human life; that they are founded upon observation at first hand and written with the pen that only genius knows how to wield.

A play possessing none of these qualities, a play built up carefully upon a basis of a little humanity imperfectly understood and an intolerable deal of stage trickery only too well remembered — a play in which the characters are puppets, the situations strained and unreal, the plot mechanical, the sentiment false, may yet succeed in creating illusions when it is cleverly represented by capable actors and actresses. A play, on the other hand, that can lay any claim to

the title of literature must create its illusions by natural means, by means that are not seen to be inartistic and crude as soon as we have escaped from the glamour of the playhouse. The characters must be real people, not stage people: the developments such as would occur in the greater world that lies beyond the small world of the hack dramatist. Blemishes that are, perhaps, unnoticed in an acted play, or that may be condoned in view of the limitations imposed by the conditions of the stage, are unforgivable in a book printed to be read and not merely to serve the purposes of a prompt copy.

It does not follow that a play written by a man of undoubted literary talent will be a literary play. Indeed, the contrary has so often been proved that it were a work of supererogation to adduce instances. A good novelist will, if he tries his hand at a play, probably write good dialogue. But very often the persons who seem to

live in the pages of his novels are stilted and artificial on the stage. Very often his situations are either bald and undramatic, or else, from a desire to make them broad and forcible enough to stand the test of the theatre, they are over-coloured and sensational. Very often his power of writing brilliant dialogue is used without a due sense of character. In such cases the literary man's dramas read no better nor have any better claim to the title of literature than the efforts of playwrights who have gone through no literary training and find it difficult even to write correct English. It is not merely good writing that makes a play literary in the real meaning of the term. It is such writing as knows how to fit every speech to the character of the person who utters it. If the people are illiterate, they must talk in an illiterate manner. Fine writing is the dramatist's worst enemy. To sum up then, a play that is to rank as literature must convince

the reader in as great measure as it convinces the spectators who see it acted, must so influence his imagination that its characters and scenes are as clear to his mind's eye as if it were being interpreted to him in the playhouse by actors capable of appreciating and carrying out the author's wishes and design.

Tried by this touchstone the plays of Mr Pinero may not be great works, but they are, most of them, undoubtedly good pieces of literature—quite as good as the novels and romances of the period. Indeed, considering the difficulties against which Mr Pinero has had to contend, their literary excellence, according to the canons laid down, is distinctly high. Mr Pinero's dialogue alone gives him an indisputable claim to be treated as a man of letters. "It is true," said Fox, on one occasion, "that I am never in want of a word, but Pitt always has *the* word." Mr Pinero has, to compare small things with great, the happy

knack of finding *the* word. Add to this the humanity of the plays, the observation that shines through them, the striving after something better than the poor conventions and artificialities of the stage as he found it, and you have the secret of Mr Pinero's position and influence as the leading dramatist of to-day.

II

BIOGRAPHICAL

Mr Pinero's name is Portuguese. The correct method of opening this sketch of his career would be to trace back the history of his family into the storied past. But I will leave that to some more industrious biographer, merely mentioning that the playwright's grandfather was an English subject —one of the last "tellers" of the Exchequer, a post long since extinct, and that his father followed the law, practising as a solicitor in London. This father regarded with no favourable eye his son's first efforts in dramatic craftsmanship. He looked to him to carry on the legal traditions of the family, and put him into his office, where the young

Pinero struggled with the intricacies of the law much against his taste. By the time he was nineteen, however, he had made up his mind that he had a vocation for the stage, and he accordingly took an engagement in 1874 with Mr and Mrs Wyndham, the well-known theatrical managers in Edinburgh. A pound a week was his salary, and he had to work hard for it. After about a year's playing of all kinds of parts at short notice, the Edinburgh Theatre Royal was burnt down, and the actor lost even his poor pound a week. However, he soon found employment again, this time in Liverpool, and in 1876 he came to London to play at the Globe Theatre. He had made, at Liverpool, the acquaintance of Wilkie Collins, who was then about to produce *Miss Gwilt*, and who offered him a part in that play. Later in the same year he had the good fortune to be engaged by Mr Irving, and he remained a member of the Lyceum Theatre company for five years. He still played small parts,

and sometimes played them very badly. In Birmingham he was once told by a frank critic that his King in *Hamlet* was the very worst King the town had ever seen! But this was early in his five years' experience with Mr Irving. It is generally agreed that Mr Pinero developed into a sound "utility" actor, with ideas of his own and a fair command of the means to express them. He considers that he established a theatrical record by playing two of the worst parts in Shakespeare—Guildenstern in *Hamlet*, and Salarino in *The Merchant of Venice*—for the longest consecutive runs ever known. In particular Mr Pinero complained of the agony of standing still for thirty-five minutes during the trial scene without speaking a word! Sothern had much the same kind of experience, and attributed to it his talent for reposeful acting. "In America I played second 'heavies,' and if you had stood and listened to the first 'heavy' man ladling out long speeches for five years you would

get as much repose as I have got." But of course Pinero was thinking all this time more about play-writing than play-acting. He wrote steadily, trying his hand at all kinds of pieces. In 1877 his first chance came of seeing his work upon the London stage. A little play called £200 *a Year* was performed at the Globe Theatre on the occasion of the benefit of "a rising young actor," Mr F. H. Macklin. Miss Compton, who is now well-known as a clever comedy actress, and as the wife of Mr R. C. Carton, also appeared in the piece. After this came *Daisy's Escape* and *Bygones*, both produced by Mr Irving at the Lyceum. For the first Mr Pinero received from his generous manager the sum of £50. He had written to Mr Irving offering to supply a curtain-raiser, whenever one should be wanted, for nothing. For some time no notice was taken of the offer, but one day Mr Irving said, "Pinero, if you like to write me a little piece for next season, I will give

you £50." After the first performance of *Daisy's Escape*, Mr Irving, perhaps without thinking very much of what he said, prophesied that, if the young author went on as he had begun, he would be sure to take a good position as a dramatic author. *Daisy's Escape*, which was revived not very long ago with Mr Lawrence Irving in the principal part, not only won for Mr Pinero the good opinion of his manager but also introduced him to his future wife, Miss Myra Holme, an actress of ability and charm. It was not long before Mr Irving's prophecy began to be justified. After his first decided success as a playwright Mr Pinero gave up acting, and wisely devoted himself entirely to authorship. His experience as an actor helped him, of course, immensely in the writing of plays, and it made him a capital speaker, as he has often shown at public dinners and meetings. But he would never have been a great, or even a very good, actor. Therefore no one can pretend to regret that his

connection with the stage was in this respect severed. The other connection which binds up his name with the history of the English Theatre during the last quarter of a century has been productive of far happier results.

III

EARLY EFFORTS

Upon Mr Pinero's early work—the plays which came before *The Squire*—there is little that can usefully be said. Nor, indeed, is it necessary to discuss in detail any but the pieces which Mr Pinero has printed in the admirable collected edition of his work published by Mr William Heinemann. These are the plays by which he asks to be judged. To rummage amongst the immature productions of the days when he was feeling his way to a method—that may be interesting to a bibliographer; it has no attraction for the critic. Nothing would, in truth, be gained by a lengthy consideration of Mr Pinero's early experiments. His success has been

so much a matter of will-power that the study of his beginnings yields little save admiration for the strenuous effort which out of so little has created so much. There was, in Mr Pinero's first attempts, scarcely anything that marked him out as a playwright of particular promise — no evidence of a superior talent—not even exceptional dexterity. He was not one of Nature's favoured children; he was not born with a silver tongue in his mouth; he did not lisp in well-turned phrases or delight his schoolboy hours by searching for *le mot juste*. His writing never seems to have been done easily. You can always find in it evidence of effort, of patient labour, of determination to secure the effect aimed at. As he gradually acquired the mastery over his material, he learnt the art of concealing endeavour. When you read or listen to the dialogue which comes so pat and seems so inevitable in *Dandy Dick* or *The Gay Lord Quex*, you lose for the moment the sense of effort.

But, when you look into it closely, you can see how laboriously it has been put together and shaped into the most effective mould.

It was in *The Money-Spinner* that Mr Pinero first showed a trace of his power. The characters are commonplace types, and they constantly talk to the audience in soliloquy and monologue. But the piece is undeniably good stage-craft. It tells how a young wife cheated at cards in order to win money to pay off a certain sum which her husband has misappropriated from his employers—not a very sympathetic motive, perhaps, but one that compels a certain measure of sympathy as Mr Pinero handled it. The wife is known as "The Money-Spinner" for her dexterity at cards, so it is not an isolated slip on her part. Her father is a gambling-hell proprietor, and she and her sister help the old scoundrel to manage it. The only character in the piece who is not more or less of a knave is more

or less of a fool, and that is the young Englishman who is cheated, and who forgives the fraud practised upon him as soon as he knows its circumstances. Mr Pinero has avowed lately his belief that the materials for drama can only be looked for to-day in the upper ranks of Society. He evidently thought so as far back as the date of *The Money-Spinner*, for by making this young Englishman a peer he gave the piece that aristocratic flavour which he declares to be essential to the plays of this age. *The Money-Spinner*, despite its faults, is interesting, effective, quick-witted. *The Squire* is more than this, and yet in a sense less than this. It is a play which begins so well that its tame and hackneyed ending is an irritating disappointment. This was the author's rough note of the idea on which the drama is based :—

"The notion of a young couple secretly married—the girl about to become a mother—finding that a former wife is still in existence. The heroine amongst those

who respect and love her. The fury of a rejected lover who believes her to be a guilty woman. Two men face to face at night-time. Query—Kill the first wife?"

Here is an idea certainly—an idea which, treated in a serious and original manner, would no doubt make an interesting play. It is true that men are not, as a rule, in doubt whether their wives are alive or not. The device is of the stage, stagey. However, something must be granted to the dramatist. No one need grudge Mr Pinero his postulate. The grudge which we do bear against him is not for starting with an improbable situation, but for handling that situation in an insincere, nerveless fashion. The first act is wonderfully good. The exposition of the theme is masterly. We are interested in the characters. We feel that the situation is big with all kinds of possibilities. Then comes the scene in which the young husband and wife learn that they are not legally married, that between them stands the previous wife, supposed honestly

by both of them to be dead. In this scene, you will remember, the husband is concealed behind a curtain. He has come in by the window while his rival is telling the story.

This is the moment that brings us to the parting of the ways. Up to now the play has been full of interest, original, sincere. This is the *crux* upon which all the rest turns. When the teller of the sad story has gone, will the husband come out at once from behind the curtain and act as a man would in such circumstances, or will he remain hidden while his wife has a scene all to herself, and then appear and behave like a stage puppet? It is a moment of breathless excitement. Unfortunately, the playwright was not strong enough to follow the bolder course. The solution took the wrong turn, insincerity laid hold upon the play, and the rest of it is mere artifice—conventional drama of the depressing period of the early eighties. The difference between the first act, so

full of power and dexterity, and the last, with its comic-opera peasants and lingering *dénouement*, is truly pathetic. The final scenes are really no more than tedious devices to keep the story afloat until, upon the stroke of eleven, the death of the inconvenient first wife can be whispered and the curtain fall upon a fresh prospect of wedding bells. "Query—Kill the first wife?" Alas, the same malady which carried off the first wife proved fatal to the last act. What was the reason? Did Mr Pinero say to himself, "*Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor*"? or was it simply that he had not yet the force of mind to break with the commonplace? The latter, I fancy. He arrived slowly at his full mental stature. In 1881 he was only in his intellectual teens. Besides, there was no one in 1881 to show the way to better things, and, in serious matters, Mr Pinero's habit of mind has ever been to follow rather than to lead.

The piece is said to have owed much of its success to Mrs Kendal. Of this I must leave my elders to speak. I have no doubt her beautiful art filled the piece with the fragrance of womanhood, and gave poignancy to the passion and tenderness which Chance had so sorely betrayed. I have only seen Miss Kate Rorke in the part of Kate Verity. She made a charming "squire," certainly, but she was gracefully pathetic rather than powerful in the emotional scenes. It is difficult, by the way, to believe that the people who made a fuss about the points of resemblance between *The Squire* and Mr Hardy's great novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, can have either read the book or seen the play. The superficial likeness between Kate and Bathsheba is their only point of contact. The rural setting, which was to waft "the scent of the hay across the footlights," was surely common property among novelists and playwrights.

It was after *The Squire* that Mr William Archer described Mr Pinero (*English Dramatists of To-day*, Sampson Low, 1882) as "a thoughtful and conscientious writer with artistic aims, if not yet with full command of his artistic means." Mr Archer found in Mr Pinero's work "sufficient promise to warrant a hope that we have in this author a playwright of genuine talent, whose more mature work will take a prominent and honourable place upon the stage in coming years." A forecast of which Mr Archer may very justly be proud.

IV

FARCE

The Squire, like *The Money-Spinner*, suggested that Mr Pinero's talent would develop upon the lines of the serious drama. But for this development we had to wait a good many years—until the production of *The Profligate*, in fact, in 1889. The interval, however, was thoroughly well occupied; it brought forth what many good judges still hold to be the most characteristic fruit of the author's pen. Between 1885 and 1887 were produced, at the Court Theatre, the three farces—*The Magistrate*, *The Schoolmistress* and *Dandy Dick*—that gave Mr Pinero at once a leading place amongst the dramatic writers of the time.

In 1889 followed *The Cabinet Minister*, and 1893, *The Amazons*, constructed on much the same lines. In this delightful series of farces, and in the Savoy operettas, we have the only two original dramatic art forms which England can claim to have evolved during the nineteenth century. As regards all other forms, we have followed; here, we lead.

When he wrote this series of what we may call the Court farces, Mr Pinero re-created the farce of character. The farce of intrigue had, in 1885, long held the stage unchallenged. Mr Pinero had tried his own hand at it before he hit upon his later vein of pure ore. In this kind the author's figures are but puppets who move according as he pulls their strings. The plot has them in an iron grip. They do not build up the story on natural lines as they go along. They are merely dolls used for the convenient presentment of some one comic idea. There are no surprises, no sudden

turns of merriment in the farce of intrigue. You see exactly how it will reach its appointed end, just as you watch a train coming smoothly along upon its appointed set of rails, switching off correctly at the points, and turning awkward corners with easy assurance. In *The Rocket* and *In Chancery* Mr Pinero's puppets were more lifelike than most, but they were really no more than lay figures cleverly constructed for the purposes of a ramified plot. His later work was very different. In the Court series the characters are astonishingly actual. They live and move and have their being quite apart from the demands of the plot. Indeed, they themselves and their idiosyncrasies *are* the plot.

It was a bold experiment to set about amusing audiences which included so many admirers of magistrates and deans and cabinet ministers and schoolmistresses by showing them these high and mighty personages in absurd and undignified situations,

and by turning upon them the high-lights of satire and ridicule. Yet this was the leading motive of each play—to make fun of various types of modern character by creating real people, exhibiting them in their actual surroundings and making them act in a highly improbable and yet just possible way. It required a great deal of wit and a great deal of tact to do this without arousing annoyance and resentment. Both ingredients were supplied by Mr Pinero in just proportion. His wit made everyone laugh, and when you can make people laugh they cannot, even if they would, continue to be angry with you. When you hear complaint that a playwright has made fun of this or that institution—the Church, or the Law, or the Army, or Marriage, or Divorce—it simply means that he has not been funny enough, or that he has been funny on wrong lines. Mr Pinero had both wit enough to be genuinely funny and tact enough to keep him upon the

right lines. The Dean in *Dandy Dick*, for instance, is so real in essence and so unreal in action that no one could be offended. He is a real person, but he is doing for the moment what a real person would never do.

This is one of the conventions between the writer of farce and the spectator. The characters of farce should be as real as their creator can make them, but they must not act as real people would act. If we could imagine an impecunious dean suddenly discovering that money could be made by betting upon horses, commissioning his butler to back a horse for him, making a bran mash for the animal in his anxiety that it shall run well, administering it himself and then being arrested on suspicion of trying to poison a starter on the eve of a race—if this were really the playwright's suggestion, the only play to be made on such a theme would have to be a very serious play—almost a tragedy, in fact. But,

in this case, it is the very incongruity of the idea that sets our minds at rest, and upon this basis of incongruity Mr Pinero built up each of his famous farces. No magistrate we know would allow his larky stepson to take him to a fast supper and gambling establishment just about to be raided by the police; no schoolmistress we know would spend her Christmas holidays figuring as a queen of comic opera; no Cabinet Minister and his wife would be likely to act as Sir Julian and Lady Twombley act; it is highly improbable that any dean would behave like the Dean of St Marvell's, however much he wanted money for his cathedral spire. Yet, of course, it is just possible that any of these things might happen; we can just imagine it; and that is where the fun comes in. When people behave on the stage as, considering their characters, they could never by any possibility behave in real life, they fail to awaken our interest. This is what

weakens melodrama and all plays based on a purposeless sacrifice or an idiotic refusal to take a natural straightforward course. But we can all be interested in improbable incongruous actions so long as they are logically led up and so long as we know that the playwright is enjoying the joke too. The persons in farce then should act always in character. They may do improbable things, but they must not do altogether impossible things. The immense superiority of Mr Pinero's farces to others even of their kind lies in his observance of these rules and in the solidity of his central characters. He has drawn them with so sure a hand that they remain real people in spite of the unreality of their actions. They would never behave as they do, but they do it so naturally that we are almost convinced in spite of ourselves.

M. Brunetière, I know, has defined farce as the spectacle of a human will striving towards some end and meeting with some

obstacle such as the irony of chance, or ridiculous prejudice, or a want of proportion between means and end. But then M. Brunetière bases his whole theory of drama upon what Stevenson called the struggle between adverse wills "coming nobly to the grapple."

"Ce que nous demandons au théâtre, c'est le spectacle d'une volonté qui se déploie en tendant vers un but et qui a conscience de la nature des moyens qu'elle y fait servir."

Thus, when the obstacles to a human will are insurmountable, as Destiny, Providence, a law of nature or a grand passion, we have Tragedy.

When there is a chance of overcoming the obstacles, as in the case of a strong social convention or prejudice, or a passion not quite of the grand order, we have Drama or Romantic Drama.

When two adverse wills conflict one with the other we have Comedy.

And when, as I have already said, the

obstacle to will is found in the irony of chance, or ridiculous prejudice, or a want of proportion between means and end, then, according to M. Brunetière's classification, we have Farce.

It seems impertinent to offer to disagree with so eminent a man of letters, but I cannot help thinking that, so far at any rate as Comedy and Farce are concerned, M. Brunetière's definition scarcely covers the whole ground. "Comedy," according to Mr George Meredith, "is a game played to throw reflections upon social life." Now there are ways of throwing reflections upon social life which are not based altogether upon a conflict of wills; and there is also a certain farcical incongruity of which M. Brunetière takes no account. Apply his test to the Pinero farces. It does not comprehend them at all. They are a form of drama quite outside its scope. May we not say that there is a distinct form of farce which is based entirely upon incongruity, and arouses merriment by appealing

to that sense of the unfitness of things which lies so near the root of Humour?

The difference between Comedy and Farce, then, is, I would submit, this. Comedy shows us possible people doing probable things. Farce shows us possible people doing improbable things. Thus *The School for Scandal* is comedy; *She Stoops to Conquer* is farce, *The Relapse* trenches upon farce, *The Comedy of Errors* is farce, *The Country Wife* is farce, while *Love for Love*, and indeed all Congreve's plays, may justly be called comedy. Put it another way and we get almost the same result. Comedy depends more upon wit, farce more upon humour. Comedy keeps us smiling. Farce sets us on to laugh, and this is done with the greatest success when it is founded upon some incongruity which is seen at once by all the world to be an incongruity. Of course there are farces which depend upon wit rather than humour; such are the plays of Mr Bernard Shaw and the earlier plays

of Captain Marshall. These would be comedies if the characters were possible people. Mr Shaw's wit is so spontaneous that he almost persuades us his characters are real. But really they are only so many Mr Bernard Shaws in disguise. Captain Marshall's creations are a little more lifelike, but his wit, on the other hand, is more mechanical. He brings forth things new and old out of a well-stored note-book. Too often his fireworks seem to have been left out in the rain. Then, again, there is the farce of intrigue, and lately to that has succeeded the farce of misunderstanding. These, as a rule, depend neither upon wit nor upon humour, but upon a large number of doors and upon the rapidity with which the actors are able to get through their lines. In neither kind is any attempt made to draw character or to display the fruits of observation, or even to make fun of the passing follies of the hour. They are born old-fashioned; they leap from their authors'

brains fully armed with japes which have done service so long that the mind of man runneth not back to the contrary. Thespis must have joked so in his cart, and the clowns of an earlier age have clowned it not otherwise. Of the two orders I think the farce of intrigue is preferable. Here there is really something to be concealed. The husband really has deceived his wife, the young man has actually married the cook or the artist's model. In the other there is no reality at all. The whole thing is a mistake. No one has done anything wrong at all, and you wish all the time that someone would be sane enough to say so and end the play. But they do not even pretend to be sane. They are merely impossible people doing impossible things.

Mr Pinero, then, brought back to life the farce of character, the farce based upon incongruity, the farce which shows us in the most light-hearted and entertaining fashion possible people doing improbable things.

To understand how witty and observant these pieces are, how genuine the humour which inspired them, they need to be read as well as seen on the stage. Anyone who can read them without being amused must be like Mr Fraser of Locheen, who had never learnt to laugh. And then consider what unspeakable torture it would be to be obliged to read the ordinary farce or light comedy which passes muster with the average audience.

Of the first three farces *Dandy Dick* is, I should say, the best, considered all round. The character is more developed and riper, and the situations grow naturally out of the idiosyncrasies of the *dramatis personæ*. *The Magistrate* is perhaps more mirth-provoking, but the fun is more forced than in *Dandy Dick*. There are signs here and there of a determination to get a laugh at any cost, and, when you come to think it over, the idea of the young man nearly twenty passing as a schoolboy of fourteen is not very

delicately worked out. There is no need to dwell upon this, but I cannot help feeling that Cis Farringdon's relations with his mother's friends and maid-servants might have been touched upon, if it was necessary to touch upon them at all, with a lighter hand. However, this affects very little of the play, which is full of uproarious humour from beginning to end. It is interesting to observe that Charlotte Verrinder is, as it were, a first sketch of the inimitable "George Tid" in *Dandy Dick*. You see it in this very funny conversation between Charlotte and her sister, Mrs Posket, in the first act.

AGATHA. Now, we can tell each other our miseries undisturbed. Will you begin?

CHARLOTTE. Well, at last I am engaged to Captain Horace Vale.

AGATHA. Oh, Charley! I'm so glad.

CHARLOTTE. Yes, so is he, he says. He proposed to me at the Hunt Ball—in the passage—Tuesday week.

AGATHA. What did he say?

CHARLOTTE. He said, "By Jove, I love you awfully."

AGATHA. Well, and what did you say?

CHARLOTTE. Oh, I said, "Well, if you're going to be as eloquent as all that, by Jove, I can't stand out." So

we settled it in the passage. He bars flirting till after we're married. That's my misery. What's yours, Aggy?

AGATHA. Something awful.

CHARLOTTE. Cheer up, Aggy! What is it?

AGATHA. Well, Charley, you know, I lost my poor dear first husband at a very delicate age.

CHARLOTTE. Well, you were five-and-thirty, dear.

AGATHA. Yes, that's what I mean. Five-and-thirty is a very delicate age to find yourself single. You're neither one thing nor the other. You're not exactly a two-year-old, and you don't care to pull a hansom. However, I soon met Mr Posket at Spa—bless him!

CHARLOTTE. And you nominated yourself for the Matrimonial Stakes. Mr Farringdon's The Widow, by Bereavement, out of Mourning, ten pounds extra.

AGATHA. Yes, Charley, and in less than a month I went triumphantly over the course. But, Charley dear, I didn't carry the fair weight for age—and that's my trouble.

CHARLOTTE. Oh, dear!

AGATHA. Undervaluing Æneas's love, in a moment of, I hope, not unjustifiable vanity, I took five years from my total, which made me thirty-one on my wedding morning.

CHARLOTTE. Well, my dear, many a misguided woman has done that before you.

AGATHA. Yes, Charley, but don't you see the consequences? It has thrown everything out. As I am now thirty-one instead of thirty-six, as I ought to be, it stands to reason that I couldn't have been married twenty years ago, which I was. So I have had to fib in proportion.

CHARLOTTE. I see—making your first marriage occur only fifteen years ago.

AGATHA. Exactly.

CHARLOTTE. Well, then, dear, why worry yourself further?

AGATHA. Why, dear, don't you see? If I am only thirty-one now, my boy couldn't have been born nineteen years ago, and, if he could, he oughtn't to have been, because, on my own showing, I wasn't married till four years later. Now you see the result!

CHARLOTTE. Which is that that fine strapping young gentleman over there is only fourteen.

AGATHA. Precisely. Isn't it awkward? And his moustache is becoming more and more obvious every day.

CHARLOTTE. What does the boy himself believe?

AGATHA. He believes his mother, of course, as a boy should. As a prudent woman I always kept him in ignorance of his age in case of necessity. But it is terribly hard on the poor child, because his aims, instincts and ambitions are all so horribly in advance of his condition. His food, his books, his amusements are out of keeping with his palate, his brain and his disposition; and with all this suffering, his wretched mother has the remorseful consciousness of having shortened her offspring's life.

CHARLOTTE. Oh, come, you haven't quite done that.

AGATHA. Yes, I have, because, if he lives to be a hundred, he must be buried at ninety-five.

The Schoolmistress is wilder farce than either *The Magistrate* or *Dandy Dick*, but the wit of the dialogue and the neatness of the characterisation remove it far away from

anything like the rough-and-tumble variety of comic drama. Vere Queckett is a genuine creation. There is much more of him in the piece than of the Schoolmistress herself, who, unless Mrs John Wood had played the part, would have been almost a secondary character. But Vere would make up for any number of shortcomings. The contrast between the immense pomposity of his "sesquipedalian verbiage" and the utter insignificance of his person and character is delicious. His description of the small lark-pie which was ordered for eight persons is irresistible. The pie is "architecturally disproportionate." His excuse for fibbing could not be improved upon: "A habit of preparing election manifestoes for various members of my family may have impaired a fervent admiration for truth, in which I yield to no man." As a foil to Vere we have Admiral Rankling, the man of action, the Admiral who is distinguished in the Service

"because his ship has never run into anything," the man of few words, who, in reply to the letter which tells him of his daughter's engagement, telegraphs from Walton the single word "Bosh!" Peggy Hesslerigge, the articled pupil, is a delightful little creature. Every line of the part recalls with pathetic force the personality of Miss Rose Norreys.

Sheba in *Dandy Dick* was another character which this young actress played with delicious humour. The scenes between the Dean's daughters and the eccentric officers who make love to them are a long way below the rest of the play both in verisimilitude and in humour, but Miss Norreys carried them off triumphantly by the dainty charm of her art. The Dean himself, his sporting sister, "George Tidd," Sir Tristram Mardon and the butler Blore are each perfect; the constable and his wife are scarcely less. When you think of *The Magistrate*, your memory goes back to

situations—to the raid on the gambling establishment or the confronting of the unlucky Mr Posket on the bench with his wife and his sister-in-law in the dock. When you recall *The Schoolmistress*, it is the laughable ingenuity of the *imbroglio* that chiefly occurs to you, the piling-up of misadventures and misunderstandings, and the gradual closing of the net around poor Queckett. But in *Dandy Dick* it is the people themselves whom we remember and over whose peculiarities we smile. The plot we almost forget, but the characters stand out clear and distinct in recollection. They are like people we have known rather better than we know the most of our acquaintances in real life. The whole play coheres so admirably, is all so much of a piece, that one can single out no particular scenes for special commendation. It is the general effect that leaves its impression upon the spectator's mind. Yet I should like to quote one scene, both for

its own sake and also to establish the relationship between Charley Verrinder and Georgiana Tidman. Sir Tristram Mardon and "George Tid" have just succeeded in rescuing the Dean from the ferocious village constable, Noah Topping.

GEORGIANA. But, oh! Tris Mardon, what can I ever say to you?

SIR TRISTRAM. Anything you like, except "Thank you."

GEORGIANA. Don't stop me! Why, you were the man who hauled Augustin out of the cart by his legs!

SIR TRISTRAM. Oh, but why mention such trifles?

GEORGIANA. They're not trifles. And when his cap fell off, it was you, brave fellow that you are, who pulled the horse's nose-bag over my brother's head so that he shouldn't be recognised.

SIR TRISTRAM. My dear Georgiana, these are the common courtesies of everyday life.

GEORGIANA. They are acts which any true woman would esteem. Gus won't readily forget the critical moment when all the chaff ran down the back of his neck—nor shall I.

SIR TRISTRAM. Nor shall I forget the way in which you gave Dandy his whisky out of a soda-water bottle just before the race.

GEORGIANA. That's nothing—any lady would do the same.

SIR TRISTRAM. Nothing! You looked like the

Florence Nightingale of the paddock. Oh, Georgiana, why, why, why won't you marry me?

GEORGIANA. Why!

SIR TRISTRAM. Why?

GEORGIANA. Why! Because you've only just asked me, Tris!

SIR TRISTRAM. But when I touched your hand last night you reared!

GEORGIANA. Yes, Tris, old man, but love is founded on mutual esteem. Last night you hadn't put my brother's head in that nose-bag.

Mrs John Wood was, of course, thoroughly at home as Georgiana. But the part is not one that plays itself, as so many of Mr Pinero's women's parts do. Miss Ada Rehan was not a success in it in America, and when *Dandy Dick* was revived in 1900 at Wyndham's Theatre Miss Violet Vanbrugh failed to get into the character the right touch of good-hearted loudness which is Mrs Wood's particular gift.

Three years after *Dandy Dick* came *The Cabinet Minister*, another triumph for Mrs John Wood, another popular success, but not another comic masterpiece like its predecessor. It is scarcely in accordance with

the formula of "possible people doing improbable things." We might accept as possible the Secretary of State who plays the flute and allows his wife to do the most desperate things in her efforts to escape from money entanglements. We might accept Lady Twombley with an effort, but Joseph Lebanon one cannot regard as anything but a stock figure of low comedy. He is extremely funny, but he is never for a moment convincing. His sister, Mrs Gaylustre, the pushing, fashionable dressmaker, is much more real. A low-class moneylender with social ambitions would not behave as Joseph behaves. Accompanying social ambition is always some faint idea of social conventions. The vulgarian who likes to tell long, tedious tales about his own vulgar exploits has no fancy for what Mr Lebanon (excuse his humour!) describes as "the top of the social tree where the cocoanuts are." The very fact of the existence of social ambition

implies an instinct, however rudimentary, for what Matthew Arnold called "fit and pleasing forms of social life and manners." Mr Lebanon has no such instinct, therefore his anxiety "to cut an eight on the frozen lake of gentility" has no apparent motive—not even the desire to advance his financial schemes at the expense of his aristocratic acquaintances. No, Mr. Lebanon is not observed freshly, but taken for granted; and he ought not to be taken for granted because, off the stage, he does not exist. The rest of the characters, beyond the four mentioned, merely serve to fill up spaces. *The Cabinet Minister* is a play that can always be counted upon to amuse, but it goes no further than that.

Vastly better in every way is *The Amazons*, produced at the Court Theatre in 1893, and written after *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, apparently by way of relaxation. Mr Pinero's art gained greatly, even in the writing of a farce, from his more serious

effort to offer criticism upon life. *The Cabinet Minister* was loosely planted in the top soil of character. Its relation to life was of the smallest. *The Amazons* has its roots deep down. It is founded upon eternal principles of human nature. In a jesting manner it brings us face to face with realities. There is more insight into the heart of things in it, more sympathy with the beating heart of humanity, than in any of the farces Mr Pinero had given us before it. Take the scene quite early in the play in which Lady Castlejordan tells the old family clergyman her life's sorrow.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. You knew Jack, my husband.

MINCHIN. Ah! yes, indeed.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. What was he?

MINCHIN. A gentle giant. A grand piece of muscular humanity. In frame, the Vikings must have been of the same pattern.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. And you remember me as I was twenty years ago?

MINCHIN (*looking at her*). I've no excuse for forgetting.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. I was a fit mate for my husband.

MINCHIN. Perfect.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Even in Jack's time I never scaled less than ten stone, and he could lift me as if I were a sawdust doll. Old friend—! Oh! old friend, what a son my son and Jack's ought to have been! (*She leans upon the gate.*)

MINCHIN. But—but—but it didn't please Providence to send you a son.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN (*beating the gate*). Oh! oh!

MINCHIN. Come, come, do learn to view the matter resignedly.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Girls! girls!

MINCHIN. It's an old story now.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Girls!

MINCHIN. Why despise girls? Many people like girls. Bless my heart, *I* like girls!

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. You can recall Nœline's arrival. I was sure she was going to be a boy—so was Jack. I knew it—so did Jack. The child was to have been christened Noel, Jack's second name.

MINCHIN. Yes, I was up at the Hall that night, smoking with Castlejordan to keep him quiet.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Poor dear, I remember his bending over me afterwards and whispering, "Damn it, Miriam, you've lost a whole season's hunting for nothing!" Then the second.

MINCHIN. Lady Wilhelmina.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Yes, Billy came next. Jack wouldn't speak to me for a couple of months after that, the only fall-out we ever had.

MINCHIN. But your third, Lady Thomasine.

LADY CASTLEJORDAN. Dearest Tommy! Oh, by that time Jack and I had agreed to regard anything that was born to us as a boy, and to treat it accordingly, and for

the rest of his life my husband taught our three children —there never was another—to ride, fish, shoot, swim, fence, fight, wrestle, throw, run, jump, until they were as hardy as Indians and their muscles burst the sleeves of their jackets. And when Jack went I continued their old training. Of course I—I recognise my boys' little deficiencies, but I'm making the best of the great disappointment of my life, and I—well, call me the eccentric Lady Castlejordan! What do I care?

(*She sits, wiping her eyes.*)

There is an undercurrent of tenderness and sympathy beneath the light tone. There is evidence in every line that the writer of it understands the hidden tragedies of men's and women's lives, and is set upon creating character, not merely upon scratching a little from off the surface aspect of things. The three Amazons themselves are cleverly distinguished—Nœline, the average nice young woman; Wilhelmina, the embodiment of all that is essentially feminine; Thomasine, the delightful tomboy, whose mannishness never swaggers itself into vulgarity. The three men are capitally drawn, too, though Lord Tweenwayes strains a little one's belief, with

his family pride even in the ailments that have been transmitted to him from the generations of his race who have "made history." As he was played by Mr Weedon Grossmith it was impossible to do anything but laugh at the ridiculous lordling. But in the printed book he seems a trifle overdrawn. André de Grival is now and then just a shade too much the stage Frenchman, but then a Frenchman freshly observed and faithfully presented might be resented by the majority of playgoers as untrue to their ideas. Altogether, *The Amazons* is a piece full of entertainment and charm, and, as I said above, a piece that strikes two or three notes of a deeper tone than we find in any of the other plays in Mr Pinero's category of farce. To sum up in a few words, the qualities that give these farces their special merit are the substantial reality of the character-drawing—not of the central figures alone, but many of the subordinate characters as well; the natural manner in which

the plots and situations arise out of the idiosyncrasies of the people ; the easy humour and wit of the dialogue. They are not valuable as pictures of the manners of the time as *The Way of the World* is valuable, and *The School for Scandal*, and, in a sense, Robertson's more sincere comedies. They contain, indeed, little enough social observation ; their *milieu* is the accepted land of theatrical make-believe, where people behave as an average audience likes to think it behaves itself. They will scarcely live, then, as Congreve and Sheridan's plays live. But they will not be willingly let die, at any rate by this generation.

V

SENTIMENT

Respect for dates and convenience of arrangement both lead me to interpolate between the consideration of the farces and the serious plays of modern life some few words on Mr Pinero's plays of sentiment. Perhaps sentimentality would be the more strictly accurate word to use. In *Sweet Lavender* certainly, and in *The Weaker Sex*, the playwright sought to draw the tear that lies near the surface, to wring the feelings of those whose emotions may be easily stirred. *The Times* is based rather upon sentiment than upon an entirely humorous view of life; its sentiment is more wholesome and bracing than in either of the foregoing instances. *Trelawny of the Wells* relapsed a little into

sentimentality, but it could plead as excuse that its fictitious date was that of a sentimental age.

In point of time *The Weaker Sex* was the first; in point of interest it is the least of the four pieces thus grouped together. The theme of a mother and daughter loving and loved by the same man is a difficult theme to handle with acceptance. There is something in the idea so eminently distasteful to the mind of the average healthy person that a play dealing with it starts at a heavy disadvantage. Also, it is difficult to reconcile such a situation with probability. In this case Philip Lyster is obliged not only to have been absent from England for eighteen years (just time enough for the daughter to be born and grow up), but also to have assumed another name, a poetical *nom de guerre*, under which he is known to the young girl. Our sense of the reasonable and the likely is revolted as well by Lady Vivash's sentimental treasuring up of the

memory of the man she quarrelled with eighteen years before the date of the play. There are women who treat men badly—she admits that she was "wilful, capricious, cruel"—and then maunder over their bad behaviour for the rest of their lives. But the dramatist who takes a sane view of life ought never to treat such women seriously. They should be shown as they actually are—monsters of egotism, going through life wrapped in a mantle of selfish complacency and self-consciousness, indulging themselves with the luxury of a woe that has no existence save in their own trumpery imaginations. Put such creatures into comedy and let people laugh at them, and go away feeling that you have cleared the air of a little cant. But do not ask us to sympathise with their smug pretence of emotion, with their endeavour to persuade themselves that they are vastly interesting persons, consumed by a passion of which they know perfectly well they are by nature incapable.

Of course Mr Pinero did not believe in his theme. If he had he would hardly have provided the play with alternative endings. For the provinces he made Philip Lyster marry Sylvia after all. In London the more rational conclusion prevailed — if an unnatural situation can have any natural conclusion—and Philip passed out of the lives of both mother and daughter. He does it in the most approved manner of the sentimentalist.

DUDLEY. Oh! Philip, is there no way but this?

PHILIP. None. You know it, Dudley. Once my shadow is taken from the lives of these two women there will be light again. I pray to time to do the rest. Time will bless some worthier man than I with Sylvia's sweet companionship, and then the first laugh from Sylvia's lips will wake Mary from her long dream.

Cannot you hear the audience rustling for its hats and coats and umbrellas and murmuring to itself about getting out before the crowd? Oh! sentiment, what atrocities are perpetrated in thy name!

I suppose *Sweet Lavender* is the most

popular of Mr Pinero's plays. It is in many ways a delightful entertainment, and it is perfectly easy to understand its attractions. There is a great deal of fun in it and a good deal of tenderness, and the characters are so pleasantly unreal that we judge them not according to our moral sense of their conduct, but as beings who move in a world that is not governed by the hard facts of life as we know it. The persons of the play are (as Charles Lamb called those of the artificial comedy of the eighteenth century) the "fictitious, half-believed personages of the stage"; and *Sweet Lavender* is a piece that allows us "to escape from the pressure of reality." Its popularity is generally explained by a vague reference to its "genial humanity" and "kindliness" and "sweetness." I confess I fail to see the "genial humanity" of a man who ruins a woman and leaves her with a child to become a lod'ging-house drudge. I do not discern the "sweetness"

of a frowsy old barrister with no occupation but fuddling and scandalising his neighbours. I do not quite know that I duly appreciate the "human nature" of the young man who persuades himself that the daughter of the lodging-house drudge, a child who, so far as we see in the play, has not an idea in her head, will make him a suitable wife. But then Mr Pinero, having chosen such characters, showed his cleverness by working upon the general fondness for unpleasant people who "have some good in them after all." And really with Dick Phenyl he succeeded wonderfully well. Of course, Mr Edward Terry's talent for presenting eccentric types of character was of great service. But Dick Phenyl is a character out of which any actor of parts can make a good deal. To a certain extent it plays itself. The actor helped the author, but he certainly did not make the play. Dick is too good to depend upon the personality of any particular

player. The old fellow is a genuine creation, and the kind of creation you cannot help liking. His reformation, like Mr Wedderburn's remorse, comes a little late in the day. These third-act repentances always leave one in doubt as to how long they will last. But then, in this case, at any rate, we do not follow them out in thought beyond the fall of the final curtain. Thackeray outraged all right feeling when he wrote, at the end of *Vanity Fair*,

> "Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out."

But no one could resent Mr Phenyl and pretty little Lavender and Mrs Gilfillian and the charming Minnie and the "cool-as-a-cucumber" Horace being called puppets, for puppets they are, though it must be admitted that they are "uncommonly flexible in the joints and lively on the wire." That is the secret of the enormous success of *Sweet Lavender*—the frank un-

likeness to life of the play as a whole; the great skill of the playwright in making its details familiar and up to a certain point real. Plays that deal with the surface elements of life in such a fashion as to make the majority of people laugh and cry, and as not to make them think, will be always popular if they are written so cleverly as *Sweet Lavender* is written. Much more of the playwright's knack is needed to deal acceptably with a piece of this class than to handle a serious theme with sincerity. The very earnestness of an inexpert dramatist will sometimes carry him through in the latter case. Unless you are by nature a sentimentalist you must write pieces like *Sweet Lavender* with your tongue in your cheek.

I am afraid I do not carry Mr Pinero with me when I put *The Times* into the class of pieces depending for their interest more upon sentiment than upon humour. In his introductory note to the printed

play he says that "in its design it is a comic play." Yet I am unrepentant. To me *The Times* appeals by reason of its sentiment, and I fancy it appealed to most people in that way. For, look you, we are not asked merely to laugh at Mr Egerton-Bompas and his snobbery and cheap ambitions. His wife is not drawn with the sole view of exciting ridicule and pouring contempt upon the figure that drapers' wives cut in Society. No, we are invited to extend to them a certain measure of our sympathy, and what is more, Mr Pinero compels us to sympathise with them. Percy Egerton-Bompas is very human and real almost all through. Mrs Bompas is entirely real, a clever study and a genuine woman. Bompas's unreal moments are few, but he has them. In the last act, for example, he is made to moralise in a preposterously lifeless strain.

"I wasn't always as I am now. It is getting on in the world that has ruined me. I've thought of it all night

through. A self-taught man must always be a proud fool; he has a double share of vanity—the vanity of the ready pupil and the vanity of the successful tutor combined! He is blown out till he bursts! I say there ought to be a law to stop men like me from 'getting on' beyond a certain point. Prosperity weakens our brains and hardens our hearts."

All true enough of a certain kind of *parvenu*, but quite out of place in Bompas's mouth. It is the author speaking, not the character. But this does not occur often enough to spoil an admirably-drawn figure. No play that I know, and scarcely any novel, brings out the pathos of the "new man's" position in Society more truly than *The Times*. The fruitlessness of all his strivings to take his place in a world that is not his, the deceit and meanness into which his social ambitions plunge him, the futility of all his efforts to make money do what money alone never can do—that is, to bestow contentment and happiness—all this is shown to us without being too much insisted upon, and we are left with something to think

about when we have done laughing and the play is over. Many dramatists have pictured for us the disillusion of the man who will not believe, until he has tried, how much,

> "'Tis better to be lowly born,
> And range with humble livers in content,
> Than to be perked up in a glistering grief,
> And wear a golden sorrow."

No one who has attempted to do this with a light hand has done it more effectively than Mr Pinero, and that is why I call *The Times* a play of sentiment and not merely a comic play.

What is it that makes most impression upon us in *The Times?* Not the purely comic scenes, but those in which tears lie not far beneath the humour. This one, for example, at the beginning of the fourth act, when all the Bompas troubles are ready to come to a head at once. The unfortunate Percy has been up all night trying to find reasons for shifting his allegiance from the Conservative side of the House to the Irish

party—a change which he is compelled to contemplate on pain of having his private affairs disclosed by a reptile Irish member :—

MRS BOMPAS. Old man, do you remember twenty years ago when you'd just sold our business at Kennington and bought the two shops which were to grow into our present colossal establishment?

BOMPAS. Rather, as if it were yesterday.

MRS BOMPAS. And do you remember how we sat down together, you and I, and drew up an announcement to our old customers? . . . Our ideas used to flow in those days, didn't they, old man?

BOMPAS. I—I suppose it was because we were younger.

BOTH TOGETHER (*sighing*). Ah'h! (*He sits beside her.*)

BOMPAS. But that was when we took a house at Haverstock Hill; do you remember?

MRS BOMPAS. Do I remember! Our first home this side of the water.

BOMPAS (*sadly*). How we have got on since then.

MRS BOMPAS. Haven't we? It was a nice house, though.

BOMPAS. You think so because we did so much to it ourselves.

MRS BOMPAS. I put up the short blinds in the bedrooms with my own hands—I know that. I preferred doing it.

BOMPAS. I hung every blessed picture in that house. I can almost feel the blisters from the cord now.

MRS BOMPAS. I wonder what we would think of it all to-day if we could see it again.

BOMPAS. Not much—after this.

MRS BOMPAS. I suppose not; we've got on so since then, haven't we?

BOMPAS. Rather.

BOTH TOGETHER (*sighing*). Ah'h! (*She gently puts her hand in his.*)

MRS BOMPAS. Our first big half-past-seven dinner-party; do you remember?

BOMPAS. Oh, lor', yes, Clara—never mind that.

MRS BOMPAS. Well, dear, we were inexperienced then. We gave them plenty to eat, though, eh?

BOMPAS. It took you half-an-hour to write each *menu*.

MRS BOMPAS. Part of the food was sent in, I recollect, and part of it was done at home.

BOMPAS. It doesn't matter much now. Many that were there won't clatter another knife and fork—but to this day I regret the part of it that was done at home. . . . That was the night, too, when we had one of our men from the shop, with "P. Bompas" round his coat-collar, to announce the guests.

MRS BOMPAS. It seemed all right then.

BOMPAS. Yes, by Jove, it's astonishing how we've got on since. . . .

MRS BOMPAS. Percy, old man, do you ever feel you'd like to go back?

BOMPAS. Back?

MRS BOMPAS. I mean, to keep our experience but to go back to the contented, simple part of the old times.

BOMPAS. It's no good wishing that, Clara. When you've got knowledge you've got everything else. It seems to me there's only one thing to do in this world—to go on; even if you're on the wrong road, Clara, my dear, get on, get on.

Even if Bompas were merely ridiculous *The Times* could never be an entirely comic play so long as Mrs Bompas remained in it. There is a tragic suggestion about her—the tragedy of a woman's life spoilt, of her true instincts crushed, of her capacity for happiness and content strained and twisted out of its natural shape. She is a snob, too, but she is so mainly because she knows that the gratification of snobbish instinct is her husband's chief pleasure. When they have secured the Maharaja to dine with them she seconds Percy in scouting the idea that they should ask their friends to meet him. "I should like the best people in London," she says, to which Mr Montague Trimble discreetly adds "the best we can get." She does not wince at the deception that is practised with the object of making her son's foolish marriage seem to be something quite other than it really is. But there is a point beyond which she cannot pass. When Bompas wildly declares that their policy must

be, for the future, self, and that they must throw over their friends if they find it necessary, Mrs Bompas sees the pitifulness of such a resolve. She has still left some of the feelings of honesty and loyalty that animate her daughter Beryl. She cannot persuade herself that a position in Society is worth all that it costs. She it is, therefore, who puts into her husband's head the idea of giving it up. Her first thought is always for her husband. She is always ready with a cheerful, encouraging word. Beneath her vulgarity there beats the heart of a true woman.

Of the other characters, Trimble is the only one who leaves a distinct impression on the mind. It is a clever sketch of the decadent aristocrat that Mr Pinero gives us. There are numbers of Trimbles to be found in these days acting as guides, philosophers and friends to families of the Egerton-Bompas type; as jackals to the husband, as social counsellors to the wife.

The Trimbles are what Dumas *fils* called the *vibrions* of Society—creatures engendered from the corrupt artificiality of modern manners and morals. One of Montague's greatest troubles is when, "for the first time for nearly forty years," he finds himself at eight o'clock not in evening dress! By dwelling upon his little peculiarities Mr Pinero gives us a vivid portrait of this contemptible parasite. He comes before us clearly with his insinuating manner, his anxiety to please, his habit of sucking lozenges, his low cunning when difficulties have to be met, his selfish annoyance when his ingenuity fails to avert unpleasant occurrences. Montague Trimble is a creation, a valuable footnote to the social history of the period.

The moderate success which *Trelawny of the Wells* enjoyed was mainly a *succès de curiosité*. If it had not been dressed in the costumes of the crinoline period, it would hardly have secured much of a hold upon

playgoers. You may say, perhaps, that if it had not been placed in this period Mr Pinero would not have written it as he did. It is a fair retort, yet it does not make my statement any the less true. There was much that was amusing in the story of the actress of the mid-nineteenth century who left her own tawdry little world to marry into the great world, and found that the great world bored her to death, and went back to her profession, and found that making believe could not satisfy after her taste of reality, and finally was reunited to her lover and lived happily ever after. There was a good deal that was tender, too, but somehow the humour and the tenderness did not mix very well. It was a fairy-tale, and as such it ought to have kept our sympathies decidedly in one direction, but in this somehow it did not quite succeed. Perhaps it was because the characters were so lightly sketched, because we really knew so little about them. Yet this, on the other hand,

was an advantage, for, if they had been more solidly blocked in, Mr Pinero's dainty handling of them would have seemed insincere. As it was, the characters and the dramatist's treatment of his theme suited one another exactly and furnished a pleasant evening's entertainment. And as this was what Mr Pinero aimed at furnishing, it is both more courteous and more just to admit so much frankly and freely than to complain that *Trelawny of the "Wells"* is not very striking as a play. If one is inclined to take the latter course, the reason must be sought in the hopes that Mr Pinero had inspired by the character of the work which immediately preceded *Trelawny*. When a man has just created a Paula Tanqueray and a Mrs Ebbsmith and a Theo Fraser it seems a little like retrogression to toy with a Trelawny and a Sir William Gower. But then this has always been Mr Pinero's way. It is difficult to believe that he is greatly interested in any one form of drama more

than in the others. He has never taken a line and kept to it. Any kind of framework suits him so long as it gives free play to his talents for construction and for studying fine shades of eccentricity in character. He appears to care more about the way in which his neatness of hand enables him to do things than about the things themselves. Ideas are acceptable to him less for their own sake than for the sake of the use to which he can put them in drama. This, I think, explains much that is otherwise difficult of explanation in Mr Pinero's playwriting career.

The comicalities of the player folk in *Trelawny of the "Wells"* had more life in them than the sentimental side of the piece, though more stress seemed to be laid upon the latter side by the author himself. The ridiculous airs of the *jeune premier* were laughably hit off. The low comedian was a very amusing little creature. The heavy tragedian and his wife represented a real

type not altogether extinct even to-day. The farewell dinner in the first act and the incursion of the soaked actors into Sir William Gower's drawing-room during the thunderstorm in the second were exceedingly funny. But the two later acts had less attraction. It was not easy to take much interest either in Rose Trelawny's love affair or in the efforts of the deserving young playwright (supposed to have been modelled on T. W. Robertson) to obtain a hearing for his plays. Miss Irene Vanbrugh's performance helped to bring her to the front, and Mr Dion Boucicault's strong sense of character made Sir William a striking figure, and the eye was taken by the familiar strangeness of the ladies' dresses, with their enormous hoops and their staring colours, and their white stockings and flat-flooted, elastic-sided boots. But there was little more in the piece to call for discussion, nor is it likely to be reckoned among the plays which gave Mr Pinero his name.

VI

SATIRE

I AM not sure whether the term "satirical" will be held to cover the three plays which I come now to consider. They are (in order of production) *The Hobby-Horse*, *Lady Bountiful* and *The Princess and the Butterfly*. They are certainly not farces, and they are not altogether plays of sentiment. Your sentimental drama must be sentimental with a whole heart, with a relish for sentimentality. But in each of these pieces Mr Pinero is inclined to poke fun at sentiment, to indicate, at all events, that it is an unsafe basis to build upon for life. I think "satirical comedy" would perhaps best describe the class into which these three plays fall. They may justly be termed comedy since, in Mr

George Meredith's phrase, they "deal with human nature in the drawing-room of civilised men and women, where we have no dust of the struggling outer world, no mire, no violent crashes to make the correctness of the representation convincing." In each of the three Mr Pinero sought "to throw reflections upon social life." The treatment of the characters of Mr and Mrs Spencer Jermyn and their philanthropic enterprises, of Miss Moxon and Mr Pinching, of Shattock and Pews, of Roderick Heron, and the whole tone of the earlier acts of *The Princess and the Butterfly*, justify us in calling them satirical.

The Hobby-Horse is, to my mind, a very pleasant, amusing and interesting piece. Its serious side is treated with a light hand; its fun is rooted in character and never degenerates into buffoonery. Yet *The Hobby-Horse* did not at first hit the taste of any large section of playgoers. Some people said it was too serious; others said it was

not serious enough. One party cried out that the author had ruined a fine situation by handling it wittily and with humour. The opposing group declared that they expected to laugh and were made to cry. Herein lies the great merit of the play. The elements of humour and of pathos are so mixed in it as they are mixed in life. The whole plot springs naturally out of the leading motive of the play. Mrs Jermyn's anxiety to work in the East-End leads directly both to her acquaintance with Noel Brice and to the discovery of Jermyn's lost son, and upon these threads the *imbroglio* is woven. Of course there are more coincidences in the play than one can reconcile with absolute probability. But coincidences only annoy us when we feel that the dramatist would have been unable to work out his theme without them. In a piece which shows us such genuine characters as are drawn in *The Hobby-Horse* we take little heed of the means employed to exhibit

and contrast them to the best advantage. Both the Jermyns are quite real people within limitations—the limitations, to wit, of the author's interest in them. Noel Brice is a really well-drawn parson of the muscular Christian type, a charming fellow as well as a good man. When he finds that he has let himself think with affection of one whom he mistakenly supposed to be an unmarried woman, we sympathise sincerely with his pain and shame. But he does not sentimentalise over his mistake and his bitter disillusionment. He bears his trouble like a man, and we cannot sentimentalise over him. This affords one reason for the small amount of popularity which the piece won in 1886. The vast majority of playgoers wanted to snuffle, to have their less noble emotions titillated gently, instead of having their finer feelings brought into play, and their mind and heart braced up by the dramatist's sane outlook upon life. By this time, I fancy, the class of theatre-goers has

been sufficiently leavened by persons of wider culture and keener intelligence to provide as many audiences as would make a play like *The Hobby-Horse* a success instead of a failure. In 1886 the new dramatic movement had scarcely begun so far as England was concerned. Of Ibsen as yet only a very few people knew anything at all. With Dumas *fils* and Augier and Feuillet we had scraped a bowing acquaintance, but they dealt so largely in sentiment themselves that they scarcely served as a tonic; they did not greatly encourage us to look at things as they are, and to develop our dramatic ideas inexorably in accordance with the laws of nature and of common life. When we thought of the German drama we thought of Klopstock and Kotzebue and sentimentality run mad. What the playgoer of 1886 felt, then, with regard to *The Hobby-Horse* was that he had been defrauded of the *dénouement* which he had been led to expect. If Noel Brice, the heroic young

clergyman, was allowed to fall in love with Mrs Jermyn, then the unfortunate Mr Jermyn ought to have fallen a victim in the nick of time to the familiar *maladie du cinquième acte*, and the curtain could have come down upon a purpose of marriage. Or, in the alternative course, the audience ought to have been treated to some scene of maudlin tears and sugary-sweet, unmanly lamentation against Fate. To send the poor young man about his business with never so much as a single appeal to the lachrymose sensibility of the easily-moved was an unheard-of departure from precedent. And yet who can read or hear the last little scene in which Brice figures without a glistening beneath the eyelids? It is as far away from sentimentality as can be, but it strikes a deep, true note of real emotion.

MRS JERMYN. Spencer, you know the mistake that has occurred. Say what you like to me—but beg his pardon, for I can't.

MR JERMYN. Mr Brice, Mrs Jermyn tells me I am to beg your pardon. I do so. I have married a

very foolish, headstrong lady—I beg your pardon. Mrs Jermyn keeps your niece company and assists you in your parish work without my permission—I beg your pardon. In the meantime you fall in love with my wife, sir, and you ultimately propose marriage to her in my presence—I beg your pardon.

MRS JERMYN. Oh, dear! oh, dear! You're not doing it properly.

NOEL BRICE. Mr Jermyn, the tone you speak in spares me the pain of thinking you believe an apology is necessary. As for my mistake, it is slighter than you imagine.

MR JERMYN. Slighter?

NOEL BRICE. Yes, sir. The only great mistake possible in proposing marriage is to select an unworthy object. I fell into no such error. I believed Miss Moxon to be a generous, warm-hearted lady whom any man should be proud to call his wife. I thought that and I think it still.

MR JERMYN. But your Miss Moxon is Mrs Jermyn, Mr Brice.

NOEL BRICE. So I find—and upon that I congratulate you with all my heart.

Tom Clark, otherwise Allan Jermyn, and Bertha, Noel's niece, are the pleasantest pair of boy and girl lovers we can recall out of endless plays in which such characters, borrowed originally from the French, have been held to be necessary. If ever they were tolerable on the stage it would

be in the persons of this breezy young sailor and the charming little person to whom he loses his boyish heart. Tom's explanation of the manner in which he proposes to inform his father of his marriage is delicious in its humour and simplicity. He has just opened his heart to the supposed Miss Moxon, who is really Mrs Jermyn, his step-mother. She questions him about his prospects.

MRS JERMYN. Are you very well off then?

TOM CLARK. Haven't a brass button, you know.

MRS JERMYN. Really, Mr Clark!

TOM CLARK. But my dear old father is rich. He and I quarrel awfully.

MRS JERMYN. Well, then, how—

TOM CLARK. Why, the moment I marry I write and break it gently to the dad—"Dear Dad, I'm married. Yours, *etcetera!*" See?

MRS JERMYN. Perfectly. That couldn't be a shock to him, could it?

TOM CLARK. No. Well, then, what's the result? Dad burning with anxiety to see my wife—*my wife!* Oh, doesn't it sound jolly?

MRS JERMYN. It *sounds* pretty well!

TOM CLARK. I take her home! I can picture father standing, glum and sulky, at the gate! "Who's this?" I can hear him saying it. "My wife, dad!" "Your

wife! What, that pretty little fairy! I like your taste, my boy—come in, we dine at seven." See?

Mr Pinching, the solicitor who always thinks of the right thing to say just a moment too late, is amusing, though cut a little too rigidly to pattern. Miss Moxon has more actuality, and perhaps the author meant her to be not quite a lady. The broken-down jockeys whom Jermyn does his best to reclaim and benefit are very funny and really not exaggerated. The workmanship of the play is excellent—even above Mr Pinero's very high level of excellence in this direction.

In the last act of *Lady Bountiful* I cannot help thinking that the workmanship sank below that level, and to this sinking was partly due the poor success of the play in London. To drop the curtain for a few moments to indicate the flight of hours is a permissible device in certain cases. But is this such a case?

Here you have Miss Brent, who has long loved and been loved by Dennis Heron, about to marry a worthy but tedious old gentleman. Why has she consented? Dennis has not seemed worthy of a woman's love. Recollect the scene in which he asks her to marry him.

CAMILLA. You've no right to speak to me like this!

DENNIS. No right? Why, a man doesn't love by right.

CAMILLA. A man *should* love by right; by the right of some achievement which deserves reward, or some failure which earns consolation. But you!

DENNIS. I know what you mean. Idle at school; in the wrong set at college; and now if I started in the race a boy would beat me.

CAMILLA (*to herself*). Ah!

DENNIS. And so I beg your pardon for dreaming you could stoop to pick a weed from the bricks of your stableyard.

CAMILLA. Dennis, it isn't great men women love dearest, or even fortunate men; often, I tell you, their deepest love goes out to those who labour and fail. But for those who make no effort, who are neither great nor little, who are the nothings of the world—

DENNIS. Who are the Dennis Herons of the world!

CAMILLA. For those a true woman has only one feeling—anger and contempt.

Camilla Brent is quite right—right in her

opinion and right in telling her cousin what it is. Stung to action by her plain speaking, he determines to do something for his living. Naturally he flies to an extreme. He has little aptitude for any of the ordinary pursuits of workaday life. But he is thoroughly at home with horses. So he takes a situation as a riding-master. To his genially selfish, worthless and unprincipled father (whose relationship to "the well-known family of the Skimpoles" Mr Pinero acknowledged on the play-bill) this decision seems little short of madness. Why should they be ashamed of living on Camilla's bounty?

"Camilla is wealthy—no credit to her; she can't help it. We're poor—no discredit to us; we can't help it. Camilla has a large house with empty rooms and beds in them—why on earth shouldn't we occupy those rooms and air those beds? Camilla's cook prepares a dinner for four persons—a dinner for four is a dinner for six. Really, you know, an extra oyster in the oyster-sauce or

an additional pinch of curry in the Mulligatawny represents—looked at in the right way — the extent of our obligations to Camilla. . . . So do, dear Dennis, abandon this crazy desire to earn your own living. It's not even original; so many men have it. And, great heavens, you'll compromise us—you really will. If people learn that my son is a cad of a riding-master they'll think I—I've no means, you know!"

However, Dennis sticks to his determination, and when he finds that the pretty, gentle, little daughter of the worthy man he serves has lost her heart to her father's assistant, he feels that he is bound to her in gratitude and honour. So he marries this pretty, gentle, little Margaret Veale. This brings us to the end of the second act. In the third act Margaret dies—dies in a scene that is imagined with rare tenderness, written with sympathy and power—a scene that wrings the heart—dies, and leaves Dennis free to find the happiness he surrendered in

giving up all thought of Camilla. Five years pass before he does find it; in the meantime he has prospered in America and Camilla has agreed to marry an old admirer. He reaches England on the eve of the wedding, meets Camilla in the village church, asks her to reconsider the answer she gave him six years before, and learns that her troth is plighted to another. Then the momentary curtain parts one day from the next, and we see the church next morning filled with guests and villagers. The bride enters, sees Dennis, who is standing in her path, "totters back with her hand to her brow," and murmurs his name. Then the old gentleman sees that his chance has fled, and says—

"There shall be no marriage to-day. I think I know, I think I know."

It is not the melodrama of this ending that spoils it—it is its ineffectiveness. Often a daring melodramatic touch will help to

carry off a situation that is otherwise of the serious order. But here the melodrama falls absolutely flat. The lowering of the curtain leads the audience to look for some final scene of an unexpected, interesting nature. This tame conclusion sends them away disappointed, and, in their disappointment, they forget how good the rest of the play has been. Mr Pinero, indeed, must have forgotten this himself when he wrote such a finish to it. The interest has been an interest of character, and there is quite enough of it left to carry the drama to its close. No *coup de théâtre* was needed: only a sincere gathering-up of threads in such a manner as the author might have thought most natural. But the courage which had supported Mr Pinero in his desire to make the play depend for its interest upon character deserted him at the end. He leans upon the broken reed of a well-worn theatrical device, and lo! it breaks in his hand.

The repetition of the letter trick, too, is a trifle lacking in ingenuity. Dennis finds a letter and learns that Margaret loves him. Another letter which falls into his hands by chance tells him that Margaret, before she died, foresaw that he and Camilla would come together in the end. In a drama of action, of violent emotions, of scenes that carry the spectator irresistibly with them in a gust of passion, almost any expedient for arriving at the necessary juxtapositions of character will pass muster. But *Lady Bountiful* is a play so slight in texture that its theme demands all the *vraisemblance* possible in treatment.

> "My masters, will you hear a simple tale?
> No war, no lust, not a commandment broke
> By sir or madam, but a history
> To make a rhyme to speed a young maid's hour."

So the author himself described it, and some critics have found here the reason for its failure to attract audiences. "The kind of play," these critics call it, "of which

everyone approves in theory and from which they unanimously stop away in practice." There is a good deal of truth in this view. We English do undoubtedly try to make each other, and even try to make ourselves, believe that we are more strictly moral and fonder of conventional virtue than we should be found if our hearts could be surprised and set in shop windows. We could never bring ourselves, as a nation, to confess that we accepted anything lower than the standards of the highest morality. Charrier, in *Les Effrontés*, excuses his philosophy of life thus:—"Mon Dieu, je sais bien que ce n'est pas la morale de l'Évangile, mais c'est celle du monde." That is the French view of the case. We prefer to practise *la morale du monde* while we profess loudly all the time that we are trying to live up to *l'Évangile*. Perhaps a good many of us are trying, but the fact remains that very few succeed. At the same time, numbers of plays have suc-

ceeded which were equally qualified with *Lady Bountiful* to "speed a young maid's hour"—*Liberty Hall*, for example, and *One Summer's Day*, and *A Pair of Spectacles* and the popular *Little Minister*. I look for the reasons of *Lady Bountiful's* small success rather in the fact that it tried to combine two kinds of play in one—that it fell between two stools.

In a play of character the dramatist must devote himself entirely to the few characters which he seeks to exhibit. He does not want subsidiary personages to fill up gaps, or striking episodes to clear up situations. There are three or four personages in *Lady Bountiful* who would be better out of the way. They contribute no variations to the real theme, and the space which their removal would release could have been used by Mr Pinero in making clearer the characters of Dennis and Camilla. We could then have had more of Roderick Heron, too, who was well worth more elaboration

and a more intimate connection with the thread of the story. As it is, he disappears after the third act, and all we hear of him is that in America he "has revealed capabilities hardly suspected in England," and is doing rather well, which, of course, we do not for an instant believe. The Skimpole family remain Skimpoles to the end.

In a play of sentiment, on the other hand, the whole thing may be as unreal as the playwright pleases. He may bring in characters simply for the sake of extracting an extra tear, invent the unlikeliest episodes merely in order to pile up the agony, break all the rules of drama and probability, so he is rewarded by the facile sob, the guerdon of "How pretty!" or "How sweet!"

Lady Bountiful is not a play of sentiment, nor altogether a play of character. It did not appeal sufficiently to the admirers of either of these classes of piece to win their whole-hearted adherence. Nor did it offer

a mixture of styles so *bizarre* as to please the large body of playgoers who seek ever some new thing; its elements were not so lively in themselves as to gain applause for their own sake. Therefore, like many another experiment, it failed.

The Princess and the Butterfly mixed up almost equally sentiment and character. It defied tradition, it outraged the accepted canons of form and symmetry, its originality even hurled itself against the salutary barriers of common sense. But, unlike *Lady Bountiful*, this play had separate elements which gave it a vogue. The first three acts are occupied with exposition. They have little interest in themselves, and the scene with the boys in the St Roche's smoking-room is tiresome and only serves a far-off dramatic purpose. Yet the attention of the spectator is held, not firmly, it is true, but with a gentle grip which seems to herald developments of the gradually unfolding plot. In the fourth act, better

late than never, these developments are reached, and from this point until the end the play is of a charm and an interest that have not been surpassed in any of Mr Pinero's works before or since.

The ostensible subject of the drama is the malady of middle-age. Both the Princess Pannonia and Sir George Lamorant have reached this period of life. Both feel that they have tasted the best that existence has to offer and that the future lies before them joyless and unexciting. This is chiefly because they have never had anything to do but amuse themselves, because they have never really come to grips with life, have never suffered, and have never loved. They almost make up their minds to end their long platonic affection, their perfunctory flirtation of so many years, by a marriage which shall enable them to drift quietly into old age holding each other's hands, not with the close grip of passion, but with the gentle clasp of a moderate

tenderness, based partly on convenience and partly upon mutual esteem.

SIR GEORGE. Well, suppose you and I became husband and wife? I am sufficiently your senior. You are rich. I am far from the state of a beggar. The world could not throw up its hands in surprise. Would it not be in all ways a suitable match? We both suffer—morbidly, fantastically it may be—but we suffer. Should we not find in each other a cure? You dread being tempted to marry unwisely. No such temptation, I believe, is likely to befall me. But, at anyrate, your honouring me as I propose would make both—safe.

THE PRINCESS. Safe—

SIR GEORGE. What do you say?

THE PRINCESS (*her eyes closed*). We should not—naturally—love each other.

SIR GEORGE. At our age I suppose there is no love but in folly. (*She makes a movement.*) Forgive me. The expression, "our time of life," was your own. (*She assents by a nod.*) I speak, of course, of passionate love. Otherwise, am I quite outside the reach of your tender regard? As for passion, let us make ourselves believe that we could not be five-and-twenty if we could! Passion! My dear Laura, has it ever happened to you to stroll through a garden on the morning following a great letting off of fireworks? Oh! the hollow, blackened shells of the spent cartridges trodden into the turf. We should at least be spared the contemplation of *that*. But you and I are already fast linked by many associations, and sympathy is affection. Certainly, in that spirit, *I* love *you* most sincerely.

THE PRINCESS (*in a strange voice*). Say three times you love me.

SIR GEORGE (*puzzled*). Three times—?

THE PRINCESS. "I love you," thrice.

SIR GEORGE (*as if repeating a lesson*). I love you. I love you. I love you. (*She throws her head back and breaks into a peal of hysterical laughter.*)

What reason has the Princess for this strange request? Simply that a few minutes earlier she has heard such a triple declaration of love from the fervent lips of a young man really in love with her. She has won the heart of the preternaturally grave Edward Oriel, and his habitual reserve has broken down before the flood-tide of his emotion. Fear of ridicule hinders her admission that she loves Oriel, and she strives to persuade herself that she must accept Sir George's lukewarm proposal. But before the passing of the month for which she has bargained with each of her suitors, Sir George's heart is also engaged in earnest. He has taken under his protection, almost adopted, an Italian girl whom he believes to be his brother's child. She

is a wayward, charming creature, with a very tender heart hidden beneath her gaiety and mischief. When he discovers first that she is not his brother's child, and next that she has learnt to love him, he very quickly passes from affection to adoration. He and the Princess make an effort to clinch their half-concluded bargain, but it fails, and they each take up their newly-found happiness to the tune of a Hungarian march called "A Szerelim mindig ifju marad," which, according to Mr Pinero, means "Love is ever young."

Unquestionably the last two acts of *The Princess and the Butterfly* are fashioned with a skill compelling admiration and touched with a certain charm that prevents us from analysing too closely the kind of happiness which the Princess and the Butterfly have found. At the moment we accept our author's conclusion. The strains of the march ring in our ears, the glamour of romantic attachment dazzles our eyes. Yes, we cry,

love *is* ever young; it can bring a fresh interest and a vivifying tempest of emotion even into the lives of the jaded victims of Society, men and women who have done nothing in the world but

> "eddy about
> Here and there—eat and drink,
> Chatter,"

without even the stimulus of love or hate, without striving, though it be but blindly, towards any aim.

But when you think it over quietly, as one should think over any play that pretends to offer us sincere criticism upon life, you have an uncomfortable suspicion not only that the world would write the Princess Pannonia and Sir George Lamorant down as foolish people, but that the world would probably be right. For on what basis have they founded their determination to defy the opinion of the world? So far as we can judge, "upon the fugitive attraction of sex." Now, marriages of men and women of tolerably equal age

and of tolerably common tastes may be based upon this attraction with every hope of success. It is, after all, the natural basis. Even when its first fine, careless rapture has waned, the leaping flames of the fresh-lit bonfire are succeeded by a steady glow which gives out more warmth and comfort. But a marked disparity of age and a striking dissimilarity of taste and inclination are seldom—very seldom—blended into harmony at the bidding of passion; they are stubborn bars of iron which cannot be permanently fused by the mere white-heat of a sudden infatuation. If Mr Pinero had shown us that there was more than infatuation in the loves of his strangely-assorted lovers, his conclusion would possibly bear the test of reflection. If he had put the whole story of their loves upon a higher plane, and hinted to us that it is never too late to hope that we may come upon the key to life's puzzle, he would have given us a poetic and a satisfying thought to take away with us.

"Only—but this is rare—
When a belovéd hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear;
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd—
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes."

No one expects Mr Pinero to be a Matthew Arnold, but there in those beautiful lines of Matthew Arnold is a subject that a playwright of poetic feeling might well essay. A true and tender devotion must always help to make the path of life plainer, to clear up the mists that gather round the wayfarer,

to show that there is a definite plan of existence which perhaps he has before never suspected. We may analyse this devotion as we will. We may take the calm, considered view of Gibbon, who understood by the passion of love "the union of desire, friendship and tenderness which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being." Or we may incline to a more mystical, transcendental view. But, however we regard it, we can only reason deductively from its manifestations, and here is the dramatist's opportunity. Mr Pinero had such an opportunity in *The Princess and the Butterfly*, but he hardly made the most of it. It scarcely seems to have possessed much interest for him. If it had, he would surely have given us more of an insight into the characters of the Princess and Sir George, and also of Edward Oriel and Fay Zuliani. But he only elaborates those characters just

enough for the purposes of the play. This is his way in all his plays, with the exception of *Iris* and *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*. There he does appear to have been genuinely interested in the problems of character that lay before him. In all the other plays he gives his creations only just enough individuality to be effective on the stage, to serve the ends of his dramatic scheme. They are so cleverly presented that they leave the impression of real characters, but they are, as a rule, not more than half characters. The author does not turn the light of his revealing lantern all round them, upon every side of their personality in turn, but only upon the one or two sides that will be useful to him. In other words, Mr Pinero does not pursue character for the sake of character, but for the sake of making stage-plays. He does not take a handful of people and let them work out their own destinies. He is not so much the observer, the recorder, as the puller of strings. He

plays with his characters as you play with chess men, moving them here and there, wherever he sees the opportunity for an effective combination. The combinations he makes are immensely effective, but they cannot in the nature of things produce upon the spectator who looks closely into them the effect of an unconstrained sincerity. Like Dr Ibsen, Mr Pinero is a master of theatrical craft, and, if he had the same interest in the things of the mind that inspires Dr Ibsen, he might have gained an equal reputation as a philosopher without any more deserving it than Dr Ibsen deserves his fame. A genuine philosopher who wrote plays would have to be very emphatically *un philosophe sans le savoir.* But a dramatist who has the gift of fashioning his dramas with a complete knowledge of stage effects and how to produce them, and who further is sincerely interested in the particular questions of mind and morals which occupy his age, can easily win the name of a

philosopher. Mr Pinero may indeed win it yet. If our playwrights would make a close study for a year of the modern French drama since about 1860, and of the serious German drama during the last ten years, I believe they would see the advantage of dealing in a sincere spirit with the manners and problems of their time. And if they could at the same time preserve their English sense of humour, they would probably end by writing much better plays than either the Germans or the French.

VII

NATIONALITY IN DRAMA

THE digression into which *The Princess and the Butterfly* has carried me leads up, I find, to a branch of my subject in which I must plead guilty to being greatly interested and with which I may as well now deal. This is the extent generally to which nationality can be embodied and revealed in dramatic art, and the extent in particular to which Mr Pinero's have been essentially English in character. The point which I have reached in the consideration of Mr Pinero's plays is sufficiently appropriate for this discussion. I have just spoken of *The Hobby-Horse* and *Lady Bountiful.* Of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* and *The Benefit of the Doubt* I am just about to speak These plays are the

four out of all Mr Pinero's work which, to my mind, really are distinctively English in tone and feeling. The people to whom they introduce us are the kind of people who form the mass of the middle class of the nation. They could not belong to any nation but the English nation. You are in no danger of thinking that the pieces have been adapted from the French or the German or the Norwegian or the Japanese. They are contributions, therefore, in a real sense, towards a national modern English drama, such a drama as we shall only possess in full measure when our vast society, or a sufficient section of it, is united in a common view of life, and in common ideals capable of serving as a basis for it. It is very important that we should understand what are the qualities in plays which go to make up a national drama, because, if ever we are to have such a form of art flourishing amongst us again, we must be on the lookout for its earliest manifesta-

tions and be ready to encourage them with an intelligent sympathy.

Now, when we English people speak of our national drama, we mean, nine in ten of us, the drama of the Elizabethan poets. That is the only dramatic literature we have had which fully expressed the character and the ideas and the aspirations of the English race. You often hear it asked in wonder why the theatre was in Shakespeare's day the constant popular resort of all classes, and why it has never enjoyed anything like the same popularity since. The reason is clear. The Elizabethan dramatists were closely in touch with national sentiment. They bodied forth in stirring language, they interpreted by means of rich imagery the thoughts and feelings that were in the mind and breast of every Englishman. The court gallant and the careful tradesman and the ruffling 'prentice took an equal delight in these dramas, though possibly in different aspects of them: each knew that the plays expressed

what he himself and everybody else felt but could not put into words. "The rough mob of the pit inspired, as it felt, the vigorous life, the rapid transitions, the passionate energy, the reality, the lifelike medley and confusion, the racy dialogue, the chat, the wit, the pathos, the sublimity, the rant and buffoonery, the coarse horrors and vulgar blood-shedding, the immense range over all classes of society, the intimacy with the foulest as well as the fairest developments of human temper which characterised the English stage" (J. R. Green. *History of the English People*). Thus the sense of sympathy grew to be an active principle of life. All classes of the community were brought closer together by the theatre. The theatre was one of the main arteries of national life.

Since then we have had a drama of the town—the plays of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, stretching from Etherege and Sedley down to Goldsmith

and Sheridan—a drama which expressed merely a phase of society and appealed only to a small class. The solid elements of English life no longer frequented the theatre. It was no longer a national institution. It had ceased to be a national institution, not so much because of the Puritanical dislike and distrust of art in any shape, as for these reasons—that a national sentiment with power upon the whole race no longer existed; that the break-up of "the Elizabethan social system ordered and planetary in functions and degrees as the angelic hierarchy of the Areopagite" had plunged all but frivolous or philosophic minds into the all-absorbing tussle with religious and political problems; that the writers for the stage appealed to the frivolous alone, and only recognised the existence of the rest by an occasional sneer or gibe. I think it is possible that if a group of dramatists had set themselves to deal seriously with noble themes and to

carry on the traditions of the Elizabethan stage before its decline, they would have won back the nation to the theatre. But no such dramatists were found, and the mass of the nation, deprived of the emotional and imaginative stimulus of the play, found substitutes for it in the theatrical preaching of Whitefield and the fervent sweetness of Charles Wesley's hymns. The Puritans had tried to stamp out of the English race its capacity for emotion, and had completely failed. They had, it is true, hindered sorely the development of the art of England—we feel the hindrance sorely to this day. But they had only succeeded in turning emotion into another channel. The stern intellectuality, the chill repression of the Puritan faith could never keep a hold upon the English race. Persuaded that emotion called forth by art was immoral, the nation surrendered its ideals and grovelled for a period in a slough of grossness and scepticism. From

that slough it only escaped by making religion emotional and finding in it the solace it had once derived from drama, the one art which had gained a really national influence. All that was best in England answered to the call—the larger number in the religious revival of the eighteenth century—a smaller, yet a more picked band, not quite a hundred years later, when the Oxford Movement gained its fullest force.

All this while, then, the drama has lain outside the track of English national life—so completely outside that only within recent years has it occurred to anyone to suggest that some day it might possibly recapture the place it once held. The suggestion, once made, however, found ready welcome. The subject of a national drama is now a stock subject for discussion wherever interests go a little beyond the material concerns of the moment. It may be a mirage, a will-of-the wisp, that we follow. But it does seem that,

if ever we are to see the revival for which so many of us hope, the times are ripening towards it now. The emotional force of the religious revivals has spent itself. Formalism and eccentricity have damped down the fires of devotional fervour. For a while it seemed as if the novel might take its place as a vehicle for the expression of ideas held in common by the nation at large. Thackeray and Dickens between them covered the whole ground, but neither was able to cover it alone. And then, even while we awaited the arrival of the man who could make a wider appeal, the reading class, for which novelists of intelligence wrote, was swamped by the Education Act, and the day when a book should be able to reveal the nation to itself was postponed for many a long year.

But the drama is not in the same case as the novel. It makes a more direct call upon the emotions: it does not demand for its comprehension the same training of the

mind as would be required to grasp the same ideas conveyed in a book. A fine play is like life itself: some see in it meanings and suggestions that are hidden from others: this man's delight in it is intellectual, that man's purely sensuous; you, perhaps, are content merely to watch and smile, while your neighbour is busy with analysis and introspection; but all have their interest aroused and find in it some kind of stimulus. Shakespeare makes some impression upon everyone, but makes it in widely differing ways. One man, after a performance of *Macbeth*, will go home, like De Quincey, and write a philosophical essay upon the knocking at the gate; another will say, with the north-country working-man of whom Mr Frank Benson once told us, that it has helped him to do a better week's work. *Hamlet* is the most popular drama in the world, because everyone can find in it something to engage his attention and to occupy his mind. We can scarcely expect

another Shakespeare. For myself, I doubt, as Lowell doubted, "whether any language be rich enough to maintain more than one truly great poet—and whether there be more than one period, and that very short, in the life of a language when such a phenomenon as a great poet is possible." But surely we can have a national drama without another Shakespeare. Other nations give expression to their national characteristics through dramatic art, and yet the supply of great poets is not any more plentiful with them than it is amongst ourselves. What do these other nations possess which we lack? They possess a class of writers for the stage who strive to awaken an intelligent interest in drama and to make it contribute to the general flow of ideas; who are not content simply to provide entertainments which shall distract after-dinner audiences and enrich theatrical managers. These writers, unlike ours, have sentiments in common with the audiences they write for. They are moved

by the same springs of passion and emotion; they are interested in the same themes and in the same modes of expression. They appeal to their audiences not by a process of calculation, but because both they and playgoers are, in virtue of their nationality, imbued with the same feelings, the same general aspirations; and because they take, in a broad sense, the same view of life and of dramatic art.

Consider for a moment a few of the foreign plays with which English playgoers are most familiar. *Place aux dames.* Take France first. M. Rostand's *L'Aiglon* is not to us a good acting play. The poetry that we find in M. Rostand's noblest imaginings fails to get over the footlights. Read the Wagram scene, and you are struck by its power and beauty; pity and terror cleanse your soul—it is mysterious, haunting, wonderful. On the stage, with a crowd of hoarse "supers" bawling behind the scene, and with Madame Sarah Bernhardt, in incredibly tight uniform,

going off like an alarum clock every few moments, the poetry, the imagination, the mystery have evaporated. What is left appeals not to the deeper emotions but to the theatrical sense, to the fondness for resonant declamation and striking contrast—in a word, to the traditional French hankering after all that savours of *la gloire*. That is why the piece carries a French audience irresistibly along with it, whereas it leaves us cold and dissatisfied. We English people love poetry: the French people love rhetoric and *la gloire*. We would have the poet suggest to us more than he can put into words, to give us "huge, cloudy symbols of a high romance," to leave something to our imagination. "'st' Inglesi son matti sul misticismo: somiglia alle nebbie di là," says the scoffing student in Rossetti's *Hand and Soul*.[1] Whereas the French mind dislikes anything that is not logical, clearly expressed, well within the four corners of its comprehension.

[1] "Those English are mad upon mysticism, as cloudy as their skies."

It agrees with Rossetti's other painter in the Pitti Palace: "Je tiens que quand on ne comprend pas une chose, c'est qu'elle ne signifie rien." Here, then, is one side of the French national character successfully appealed to by *L'Aiglon*, as it has been appealed to in the past by Victor Hugo and Dumas *père*, and M. Coppée and a host of others.

Again, the average Frenchman's ideal of life is the ideal (to use a phrase now classic) of *l'homme sensuel moyen*. See how faithfully the modern French play represents that. *La Dame aux Camélias* represents it on the sentimental side. *Sapho* and *La Parisienne*, in which Madame Réjare exhibits the immense cleverness of her realist method, reveal it upon its moralising and its cynical sides. *La Tosca* is the kind of piece which gratifies the appetite for horrors and harlotry which *l'homme sensuel moyen* must now and then indulge. *La Course du Flambeau* catches him in a

reflective mood—the mood of "the morning after," when he feels doubtful about the welfare of the human race. The main thing I want to insist upon is that you can trace in all of these plays, and they are a fair selection from the modern French drama, the existence of the ideal of the *homme sensuel moyen*, which is the ideal both of the playwright and of the spectators, and which therefore gives the modern French drama the title to be called a national drama in the natural sense of the words.

You find when you examine the modern German drama that it can make good the same claim to this epithet "national." Its ideals are quite different from the French ideals. It sets itself for the most part to discuss heavily, and without the smallest spice of humour, the problems of our super-civilised existence. It offers pictures of provincial and metropolitan life that are strangely real in externals and strangely exaggerated in essence. But this exagger-

ation is inevitable considering the methods employed. The characters are scarcely human beings, studied for their own sake, so much as abstract types of passion or peculiarity set up for the purpose of the dramatist's theme. Colonel Schwarze in *Magda*, for example, is an embodiment of the parental idea; Von Röcknitz in *Glück im Winkel* merely sums up the German notion of a full-blooded, magerful *coureur de femmes;* even in *Johannisfeuer* the interest of the problem is rather universal than personal. As it is with Sudermann, so it is with Hauptmann as well; perhaps even more so. In *Die Weber* the characters are the playwright's puppets: it is the atmosphere and the episodes that give the drama its marvellous power and intensity. *Einsame Menschen* has more individual interest, but here, too, the people of the play are all carefully labelled. This is in accordance with the German audience's view of life, with the Teutonic attitude

of mind which prefers a studied philosophic generalisation to the presentment of a particular human being. The serious drama of Germany, in fact, expresses the serious side of the national character, just as the comic drama keeps touch with the German weakness for fun cut in thick slices and for elephantine gambols. Both varieties are unmistakably German, as much in expression as in idea.

Turn now to a drama that is based upon ideals very unlike those both of France and of Germany—to the drama of Japan, as we have had it interpreted for us by Japanese players, the exquisite Sada Yacco, Mr Kawakami and their troupe. Here is a form of art that proceeds directly from national character. What do the Japanese chiefly delight in? In beauty of colour and form, from the simplest manifestations of natural loveliness to the strange exotic imaginings of an art based upon traditions of incalculable antiquity, and followed with

a passion for perfection that is shown as clearly in trifles as in its most ambitious attempts. First of all, then, the Japanese drama satisfies this desire for beauty. The very scenery brings to us Western folk a sense of refreshment and satisfaction; the dresses are things of rare delight, every one; all the movements and gestures of the actors fall into rich harmonies of expression, and an entire absence of self-consciousness lends them a charm like that of music, or the ordered, inevitable processes of Nature. And what of the matter of their plays? They are rooted nearly all in that conception of duty which is so strong an element in the Japanese character—the duty which men and women owe to themselves, to one another, and to the eternal verities of justice and of truth. In minor ways the drama of Japan satisfies to the full the Japanese sense of the mysterious, the terrible, the inevitable; and it satisfies as well their childlike delight in combats

and in playfulness. These players have studied every means of heightening the effect of their efforts. Think of the intermittent striking of the gong throughout the intensely moving last act of *The Wife's Sacrifice*, the wailing voice raised now and again in melancholy chant, the stillness broken only by these ominous sounds and by the pathetic cheeping of the birds without, symbolic of the heedlessness of Nature to the little tragedies of humankind. If this simple and unfamiliar art, with its unsophisticated directness of method, can produce so deep an effect upon us with our abnormally-developed sense of the ridiculous, imagine how it must affect the people out of whose passion for beauty and out of whose simple ethical code it has been gradually developed.

And now let us think of our own drama, and ask ourselves how far it expresses any aspect of our national character. We can claim to have evolved, during the past

generation, two art-forms which are distinctively English—the Savoy opera and Mr Pinero's farces of character. But, then, neither of these have "made school." Both depend, for the most part, upon the humour of individual men. They are not the inevitable outcome of a generally-accepted view of life; they are rather the creations of personal talent, forcing a certain number of people to look at themselves and the world in distorting mirrors. It is true that our peculiar humour makes us, as a race, derive a certain enjoyment from being shown our own absurdities by keen-witted satirists. We have no objection, because we feel all the while that, even with our absurdities, we are immeasurably superior to all nations else: indeed, the possession of a few absurdities which, amongst our noble qualities, pass almost unnoticed, serves to point and emphasise our superiority. Exaggeration, too, seems to come natural to us on the stage. So

far, then, these two forms of drama are based upon national characteristics, but so far only and no farther. They are, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, "at the bottom fantastic": not so utterly untrue to our real selves as the sugar-plum play, or as the many deodorised farces which we borrow from the French and spoil in borrowing: but still fantastic in being removed from the main currents of the English spirit. A more serious drama is needed to reflect these, and that we lack. Mr Pinero, as I have said, seemed to be striving towards it when he wrote *The Hobby-Horse* and *Lady Bountiful*, and later on when he gave us *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*. The pity of it is that he did not persevere. The two later plays of those just mentioned come now in the natural order of our survey to be considered, and I must try to show in what way they reflected, more than Mr Pinero's other dramas, the spirit of the times as it affects the English race.

VIII

SERIOUS INTENT

When Mr Pinero wrote *The Profligate*, in 1887, he followed up, after a long interval, the line of advance upon which he started with *The Squire*. Whether he chose to deal with a grave problem of life—one of the problems which face every man when he enters the manly state, and which may be offered for the solution of any woman who has become a wife—whether he left the comic and the sentimental highroads of drama for this more strenuous path because he felt impelled thereto by sympathy and interest, or whether he merely judged that the time was ripe for plays of serious intent, I cannot tell. One is inclined to pin one's belief to the former alternative when one

recollects that he has given us, since *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*. But we must also remember *The Princess and the Butterfly* and *The Gay Lord Quex*. *Trelawny of the "Wells"* he may have written by way of recreation. *The Princess and the Butterfly* even may have been treated as he treated it of set purpose, though, as I suggested just now, a deeper interest in the eternal verities of existence would probably have brought the theme nearer home to the mind and heart of the time. *The Gay Lord Quex* is on a different plan altogether. Here Mr Pinero took no side, did not even show which way his sympathy tended. He drew a picture — an exaggerated picture in most respects—of Society in its most corrupt and unpleasing aspects, and made the best use he could of his materials from the point of view of theatrical effect, without offering any moral or appearing to enforce any lesson. What moral

there was the spectator had to draw for himself. How can we explain this change of plan? Had Mr Pinero changed his outlook in the interval between 1887 and 1899? If not (and it scarcely seems probable), how can we reconcile the two methods of treatment—the one bracing, ennobling, full of a stimulating sincerity; the other, frankly cynical, making its appeal by dint of cleverness and not by dignity of purpose? Only by concluding that Mr Pinero has no particular fondness for either method, and that he adopts the one or the other as his own fancy and the fashion of the hour may dictate.

To this it may be answered that Mr Pinero is a writer not of one mood but of many: that it is stupid to expect him always to produce the same kind of play: that, in short, his versatility of method is his greatest merit and the surest proof of his genius.

Well, for those to whom this is so, it is

so. It is, I grant with the utmost readiness, a great merit to be versatile. But versatile authors do not, as a rule, leave a deep impression upon their age. Even when a man has the brain and the heart of a Robert Buchanan he cannot afford to squander his genius in every direction. Furthermore, an ingrained habit of mind must leave its mark upon everything which the mind produces. Over Mr Meredith's work broods always the spirit of Comedy: over Mr Hardy's always the Tragic Muse. Richard Feverel and Beauchamp both come to an end that might be, and generally is, termed tragic. But consider cases closely and you will find in each a certain freakishness of circumstance which is alien to the tragic manner. In neither case has the end been foreseen as inevitable. In neither case is it the result of conflict with one of the great obstacles to the human will—Destiny, Providence, a law of nature or a grand passion. In Mr Meredith's books we see

man contending with his fellow-men and with the obstacles which their conventions and prejudices set in his path. In Mr Hardy's novels, on the other hand, the catastrophe is to be apprehended from the first. Humanity always "appears on the scene hand in hand with trouble"—trouble not created by its own actions, but trouble which has its root in the very nature of things.

Now, if Mr Pinero had an ingrained habit of mind, a steadfast persistency of vision, they would colour all that he wrote. They might tinge it lightly, or they might deeply dye it to a uniform hue. What is certain is that in all his work we should find some evidence of the point of view from which he surveyed existence. Any such evidence I must admit that I have failed to find. It may be my own fault, my own dulness of perception, but I have never heard anyone else claim to have found it, and until such a claim is put forward and justi-

fied I do not see that we can come to any conclusion save that Mr Pinero has no particular point of view, and that his plays must be judged one by one, each on its own merits, not in bulk, as a body of work expressing a considered and consistent criticism of life.

This, it will have been noticed, is the plan I have adopted in discussing the plays. In succession we have had under the glass Mr Pinero's early efforts, his farces, his dramas of sentiment, his satirical comedies, and now we come to his plays of serious intent. It is in these that I personally am mainly interested, and since I believe the majority of my readers will share this predilection, I shall offer no excuse for dealing with them at some length. There is an increasing number of playgoers who agree with Alexandre Dumas *fils* that, while it is good to laugh, it is not good to laugh at everything; and that there are certain subjects which ought to be treated seriously even in the theatre.

"En France nous rions beaucoup des choses sérieuses; c'est même de celles-là, je crois pouvoir l'affirmer, qu'on rit le plus. Moi, c'est un goût particulier, j'aime mieux rire des choses qui ne sont pas sérieuses et qui n'en ont pas moins la prétention de l'être; ma conscience se trouve ainsi de repos; je suis sûr d'avoir plus longtemps des sujets de gâité et d'avoir finalement raison."[1]

Holders of this opinion have had to bear a good deal of ridicule in England as well as in France, and also a good deal of abuse. For a good many years "Ibsenite" was a term of reproach implying, in the person at whom it was hurled, not only lack of taste, but irreligion. To admit a liking for the "problem play" was to write oneself down in general estimation a raker amongst unsavoury garbage. Any drama that dared to hold the mirror up to Nature and to reveal what the polite world, in the manner of Mr Podsnap, preferred to wave aside, was decried as morbid, unwholesome, unpleasant. Any dramatist who, in pursuit of better things, ventured to

[1] "Les Femmes qui Tuent et les Femmes qui Volent."

"Take the suffering human race
To read each wound, each weakness clear;
To strike his finger on the place
And say, 'Thou ailest here and here,'"

was convicted not only of tiresomeness, but of immorality, whereas, of course, the only immoral plays are the plays which represent vice both as being attractive and as having no necessary, unpleasant consequences, which vice always has. In a preface to a drama produced at the Comédie Française as far back as 1840, M. Walewski wrote a few sentences on this subject which sum it up very pithily and briefly. "L'immoralité," said M. Walewski, "consiste à déguiser la laideur de la corruption et à parer le vice des couleurs les plus séduisantes, à trouver des phrases mignardes, des affêteries de mot et de style pour voiler la misère des civilisations corrumpues et des âges pervertis. Mais, signaler la profondeur de la plaie, se tenir au bord du précipice et le montrer du doigt afin qu'il

soit evité, est-ce là de l'immoralité?" A thousand times, no!

Now in *The Profligate* Mr Pinero set out to do just what the author of the play of 1840 did—to stand on the edge of a precipice and to warn all passers-by to give it a wide berth. He set out to show, in a word, that the man who leads a dissolute life before marriage will pretty certainly have bitter cause to repent it afterwards.

> "It is a good and sooth-fast saw,
> Half-roasted never will be raw;
> No dough is dried once more to meal,
> No coach new-shapen by the wheel.
> You can't turn curds to milk again,
> Nor Now by wishing back to Then;
> And, having tasted stolen honey,
> You can't buy innocence for money."

These were the lines Mr Pinero set upon his playbill. They strike the keynote of the play as he wrote it. Not, however, as it was acted at the Garrick Theatre. Mr Hare lacked Mr Pinero's courage. As he afterwards admitted in a public letter, he

felt afraid of braving the popular prejudice in favour of a "happy ending." He suggested that Mr Pinero should give the go-by to the stern logic which made Dunstan Renshaw bear the consequences of his profligacy. The counsel of expediency prevailed. The ending was re-written. A "happy ending" was contrived, and there was lost more than half the force of the lesson Mr Pinero set out to teach. The original ending — the ending which Mr Pinero printed and to which he presumably adheres—is painful; it presses home with uncompromising force the truth embodied in the lines just quoted. The stage ending was not really "happier," but it seemed so to the people who regard only the outsides of things. How could Renshaw and his wife ever be happy again, she knowing the life he had lived and he knowing that she knew? It was not merely that he had lived what is called with unconscious irony "a man's life."

That might have been forgiven, as Hugh Ardale's past is forgiven by Ellean; forgotten, even, if Leslie only knew of it vaguely and had no hideous details seared into her brain. One can never tell of what a loving woman's heart may be capable. Renshaw, it is true, is a kind of man for whom it seems at first impossible to feel much sympathy. On the very eve of his marriage to the girl who has, he declares, changed and purified his whole nature, he indulges in a vulgar carouse. On his wedding morning he shows no sign of shame or regret when Murray speaks of the smirched love he offers Leslie. He jauntily says that he has taken the world as he found it, and prates fatuously about happy marriages being the reward of men who have sown their wild oats. Women, however, have loved such men, even when they have guessed pretty shrewdly at the truth about them, and will go on loving them without a doubt. Dissipation of the

ordinary kind has been forgiven, and will be forgiven so long as men are weak and women steadfast. But Renshaw was not the mere dissipated man-about-town. He was a betrayer, a seducer, as well as a common *coureur de femmes.* His character is the character of a profligate without any redeeming feature. It is not suggested that the episode of Janet Preece stood alone. No doubt "Laurence Kenward" had duped and ruined other poor girls under the cowardly refuge of a false name. But, even if it did stand alone, is such an episode ever to be forgiven by a wife who knows all its foul details and has realised with agonising exactness what its consequences have been? If Leslie could have pardoned Renshaw, could he ever have been forgiven by her brother Wilfrid, who has loved Janet and whose life is embittered by Renshaw's crime? No, between Leslie and her husband would have stood always the shadow of Janet Preece. No happi-

ness was possible to them. Renshaw's misery in the last act may incline us to be merciful in our view of his faults. It is difficult to withhold from him a measure of pity, even of sympathy, when the change which his marriage has made in him becomes clear.

"I married," he tells Murray, "in darkness, as it were; she seemed to take me by the hand and to lead me out into the light. Murray, the companionship of this pure woman is a revelation of life to me. . . . But you know — because you read my future—you know what my existence has become. The Past has overtaken me! I am in deadly fear! I dread the visit of a stranger or the sight of strange handwriting, and in my sleep I dream that I am muttering into her ear the truth against myself."

"Be sure your sin will find you out" had been Murray's warning, and Renshaw can only groan out that he spoke truly.

But neither pity, nor the latent tendency in nearly all of us to believe in the efficacy of eleventh hour repentances, must blind us to the realities of things. For a mean, despicable, unmanly sin like the sin of Dunstan Renshaw there is no forgiveness, and to make thoughtless people believe that a "happy ending" is possible to a story such as the story of *The Profligate* is to palter with truth and to do an ill service to the cause of morality.

It is this willingness to palter with truth and conscience which has hindered the drama in England from taking the place it has taken in other countries. For a writer to write against his own judgment what will please the majority of people is fatal to the interests of art. It robs the artist's work of its interest, it robs his calling of its dignity. Imagine a publisher suggesting to Mr Meredith or Mr Hardy that they should alter their novels in order to make them more acceptable to

the purchasing public! It is difficult to imagine this. It is impossible to imagine Mr Meredith or Mr Hardy consenting to such a proposal. How can the theatre, so long as managers and authors treat it in this fashion, expect to be regarded as anything but a form of light entertainment? And if our leading playwright, with his position assured, is so easily persuaded to sacrifice his ideas on the altar of expediency, what courage or consistency can be looked for in authors who are struggling hard to make a living and a name?

If *The Profligate* were not a fine play, one would less regret its author's instability of purpose. It is a fine play in spite of its occasional theatricality. It is now and then a little too "well made" to be absolutely convincing. But the theme is handled with remarkable power. The story holds the attention firm, and the pity and pathos of broken lives touch the heart

with poignant force. Upon the reader it produces almost as much effect as upon the spectator in the playhouse — in the later acts quite as much. This is the test of good drama now as it was in the days of Aristotle. In the Poetics we read that the plot of a tragedy "ought to be so constituted that, even without the aid of the eye, anyone who is told the incidents will thrill with horror and pity at the turn of events. . . . But to provide this effect by the mere spectacle is a less artistic method and one dependent upon the extraneous aid of stage management. Those who employ spectacular means to create a sense, not of the terrible, but of the monstrous, are strangers to the purpose of Tragedy." *The Profligate* is as truly a tragedy as any of the great dramas of the Greeks which showed men struggling in the grip of Fate. Fate is, after all, only the nickname we give to retribution — retribution for our own

follies and blunders, or, it may chance, for the long-past sin or thoughtlessness of others. The Greeks bridged over the dim relation between cause and effect by inventing a stern Power, which compelled men hither and thither as it willed, now in justice, now in irony. We see more clearly that they are the victims, not of any agency outside themselves, but of their own acts. Destiny is, in short, nothing but Character. Here is the modern basis of tragedy, and upon this basis both *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* are founded.

The one, indeed, is a pendant, a corollary to the other. The story of Dunstan Renshaw shows us that the profligate must always

> "Buy a minute's mirth to wail a week,
> And sell eternity to gain a toy";

that a man cannot escape from his past. The story of Paula Tanqueray enforces

the same truth as it applies to the woman. Paula, like Dunstan, wanted to leave behind all that had marred her life, to let it be as if it had never been. But she finds the burden of her former self dogging her every footstep just as he did. It is not merely that the outward consequences of her acts rise up to cloud her horizon: her very nature bears the impress of perverted instincts. "There's hardly a subject you can broach," Aubrey tells Cayley Drummle, "on which poor Paula hasn't some strange, out-of-the-way thought to give utterance to, some curious, warped notion. They are not mere worldly thoughts—unless, good God! they belong to the little hellish world which our blackguardism has created: no, her ideas have too little calculation in them to be called worldly. But it makes it the more dreadful that such thoughts should be ready, spontaneous; that expressing them has become a perfectly natural process; that

her words, acts even, have almost lost their proper significance for her and seem beyond her control." Paula cannot do or be what she would. She wants to be a kindly, trusty comrade to Aubrey, but she can never miss an opportunity of saying an ill-natured word. She longs to make Ellean love and confide in her, but she is always on the watch for signs of distrust and is for ever revealing her morbid jealousy of the tie that binds Ellean and her father together. She would like to receive Mrs Cortelyon in such a manner as she knows both prudence and politeness dictate, but, instead of this, she behaves like a madwoman. She cannot go back to her former friends; she has outgrown them. The vulgarity of Lady Orreyed and the toping imbecility of Sir George fill her with disgust. The past hangs its loathsome weight about her memory; the present leaves her unsatisfied and ill-content; the future terrifies her

with its long vistas of weariness and horror. Read her last long speech to Aubrey. Is there any passage in contemporary literature which compresses into more striking words the Nemesis that waits for all, men or women, who live as Paula Tanqueray had lived? The sudden appearance of Captain Ardale has shown her in a flash that the past can never be shaken off. Her husband tells her that her nerves are unstrung; "that sort of thing isn't likely to recur. The world isn't quite so small as all that."

PAULA. Isn't it. The only great distances it contains are those we carry within ourselves—the distances that separate husbands and wives, for instance. And so it'll be with us. You'll do your best. Oh! I know that—you're a good fellow. But circumstances will be too strong for you in the end, mark my words. . . . Of course I'm pretty now—I'm pretty still—and a pretty woman, whatever else she may be, is always—well, endurable. But even now I notice that the lines of my face are getting deeper; so are the hollows about my eyes. Yes, my face is covered with little shadows that usen't to be there. Oh! I know I'm "going off." I hate paint and dye and those messes, but by-and-by I shall drift the way of the others; I sha'n't be able to help myself.

And then some day—perhaps very suddenly, under a queer fantastic light at night, or in the glare of the morning—that horrid, inevitable truth that physical repulsion forces on men and women will come to you, and you'll sicken at me. . . . You'll see me then, at last, with other people's eyes; you'll see me just as your daughter does now, as all wholesome folks see women like me. And I shall have no weapon to fight with—not one serviceable little bit of prettiness left me to defend myself with! A worn-out creature—broken up, very likely, some time before I ought to be—my hair light, my eyes dull, my body too thin or too stout, my cheeks raddled and ruddled—a ghost, a wreck, a caricature, a candle that gutters, call such an end what you like! Oh! Audrey, what shall I be able to say to you then? And this is the future you talk about! I know it—I know it."

It is an awful speech, this of Paula's, a speech that rings in the ears for days. And it is, every word of it, true, not of Paula's case alone, but of every case like hers, and in a modified degree its truth comes home to all who wantonly break the laws which the experience of the world has made for men and women. There may for certain people be a higher morality than the world's, but in their individual equation wantonness can be no factor. Many are offended by

plain-speaking on these points. "We need no such warnings," they say. "Why recognise the existence of women of Paula's class at all? These subjects are not for public discussion, even by the preacher. We should be kept from all knowledge of such things." Yet neither the preacher nor the dramatist do their duty to their age if they see a precipice yawning in the path and fail to warn the passers-by. The social evil with which Mr Pinero dealt in *The Profligate* and in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* is a precipice that has engulfed more lives than can be counted, and it is not by looking away from it that the evil can be cured. Cured perhaps it never can be, but to make manifest its hideousness is the best means of lessening the number of its victims, and that is what Mr Pinero did in these two plays, with the skill of the artist as well as the philosopher's calm insistence upon the lesson he has in mind.

Compare with this pitiful prophecy of Paula's the speech in which Renshaw forecasts the only life which he and Leslie could live in common.

"Supposing there is some chance of my regaining her. Regaining her! How dull sleeplessness makes me! How much could I regain of what I've lost! Why, *she knows me* — nothing can ever undo that— *she knows me.* Every day would be a dreary, hideous masquerade; every night a wakeful, torturing retrospect. If she smiled, I should whisper to myself, 'Yes, yes, that's a very pretty pretence, but *she knows you!*' The slamming of a door would shout it, the creaking of a stair would murmur it—'*she knows you!*' And when she thought herself alone, or while she lay in her sleep, I should be always stealthily spying for that dreadful look upon her face, and I should find it again and again as I see it now—the look which cries out so plainly, 'Profligate! you taught one good woman to believe in you, but now *she knows you!*'"

The same note of hopelessness sounds here, the same terrible certainty that, as men and women shape their lives, so they must live them until the end. It was this hopelessness that made Mr Pinero close both plays with the suicide of the being whose existence was thus blighted. This

was another concession, surely, to the fashion which demands that plays shall come to some definite conclusion. Would it not have been even more effective to leave Dunstan and Paula face to face with the necessity of living on somehow? Suicide ought only to be permitted in fiction to characters which we may justly regard as heroic. It ought not to be allowed to dignify weak characters which have no heroic elements about them. It is in no sense an expiation; it is merely a way of escape, and a way which very few of the Paulas and Dunstans take, however much they may talk about it. The total number of people who kill themselves is quite small, and of this total number there is but a small percentage who are driven to commit suicide by any real trouble or misfortune. I quite admit that neither the average reader of books nor the average spectator at plays likes to be left with a problem unsolved.

Either there must be a "happy ending," which need not trouble the mind with speculation, or the knot must be cut by death. This is not the way of life at all, and it is a pity that the unthinking should be encouraged to suppose that it is.

The "make" of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* is more finished, and therefore more convincing in detail than that of *The Profligate*—or perhaps I should say than that of the earlier part of *The Profligate*. Compare the openings. Hugh Murray's conversation with Lord Dangars scarcely bears upon it the stamp of nature. Aubrey's dinner-party is a perfect piece of exposition. The whole situation is unfolded simply, easily, naturally, not a word too little or too much, we are interested at once, and our attention is never allowed to wander for a moment from the problem in hand. The author's purpose is effected without any straining

of probability, without even making the spectator or the reader conscious of the artifice that is used. There are coincidences in either piece, but they need not trouble us. It might be better if they were less long-armed, but coincidence is always permissible on the stage so it be not merely episodic. Here, it matters little by what means Janet and Ardale are brought into the lives of Leslie and of Ellean. The great matter is to press home the author's conclusions, and this demands their presence in the plot. They are brought in to serve the definite end of the whole play; the coincidences, in themselves, are of no interest at all. On the other hand, the characters are all drawn so as to interest us for their own sake, as well as in their general bearing upon the leading motive. Ellean is typical of a certain kind of girlhood peculiarly English. Her shrinking from Paula, and her swift accusation of herself, at the end,

of having helped to kill her step-mother, are equally true to this type. So is the illogical but very natural feeling which prompts her to forgive Ardale for having been "a bit wild at one time," because of what he has done since in India! Cayley Drummle is delightful—as shrewd, as kind-hearted and as amusing a little man as ever wasted his time in hanging about London clubs half the year and country-houses the rest. Sir George and Lady Orreyed (*née* Miss Mabel Hervey, "type of a class which is immortal") may seem a trifle overdrawn, but could be amply justified by human documentation. The dialogue all through is admirable—witty when the occasion permits — one thinks at once of Cayley's description of the first Mrs Tanqueray, indeed of Cayley's talk throughout the play; at a high level of seriousness and power in the long closing scenes. Indeed, the piece, regarded as a whole, strikes one as being

finer and more worthy of respect every time one sees or reads it afresh. The French writer, M. Charles Hastings, was not going beyond the generally-accepted opinion when he wrote of it:—"C'est, de l'avis des meilleurs critiques, l'œuvre la plus remarquable de l'histoire du Théâtre Anglais pendant la deuxième partie du XIX^e. siècle."[1]

While I subscribe readily to this opinion, I am inclined, as a matter of personal preference, to regard *The Benefit of the Doubt* as the play of Mr Pinero's which, on the whole, has given me the most pleasure. It had nothing like the success of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*. A great many people who heartily admire Mr Pinero's work look blankly at you when you mention it, and admit that they have never seen this excellent piece. I think its failure to hit the popular taste must be set down to the fact that its theme is not direct and single like

[1] *Le Théâtre Français et Anglais*. Firmin-Didot, Paris. 1900.

that of the earlier work, but complicated and of a criss-cross texture; that sympathy is drawn different ways, and the spectator compelled to consider the nature of the situation instead of being allowed to start from a point at which everything can be taken for granted. Furthermore, there is nothing heroic about any of the characters. Fraser of Locheen is a dull fellow who has married the wrong woman. Theo is a poor, tawdry, flighty little person who has accepted the wrong man. Jack Allingham and his wife are an equally ill-assorted pair. Her jealousy makes his existence with her unendurable, because he has not strength of mind enough to endure and to convince her by degrees that her state of mind is absurd. Nor has he sufficient consideration for his old friend Theo to prevent him from compromising her reputation by stupid thoughtlessness. Sir Fletcher Portwood is a wind-bag, Claude Emptage a fribble, Justina little better than a minx, and Mrs Emptage a fit mother for

such children. Remains Mrs Cloys, the Bishop's wife—well, in Mrs Cloys there is an element which does approach the heroic, but it stops short at the approach. It may be heroic to flout the prejudices of the world, but it can never be heroic, however judicious and proper it may be, to shape one's conduct with the view of conciliating the world. And that, after all, is what Mrs Cloys thinks about principally when she plays the *dea e machina* and offers to rehabilitate Theo in Society's esteem by taking her niece under her wing. What does she say herself? Not that it is a censorious, evil-thinking world, and that no heed need be paid to what scandal-mongers and worldlings may say. Oh, no! that would not be at all in keeping with Mrs Cloy's character. It is of the effect of her action upon the world that she is thinking all the time.

"Both in London and at St Olpherts Theophila will be my close companion. In our little London gaieties she will figure prominently. At certain formal gatherings she will share the responsibility of the hostess. If any

paragraph concerning our doings should creep into the newspaper it will concern the Bishop of St Olpherts, Mrs Cloys *and* Mrs Fraser of Locheen. Oh, I don't think there will be many to wag evil tongues against Mrs Fraser a few months hence!"

A kindly speech, if you will, and a speech wise from the world's point of view, but not heroic.

Now, the average audience in an English theatre likes the heroic in drama. The popularity of the melodrama is due to this taste more than to anything else. The average audience likes to see people performing noble, improbable actions. For one thing, these actions remove the play so far outside the realm of reality that the spectator does not have to think much about it either at the time or afterwards. It will not bear thinking about; he is not meant to think about it. *The Benefit of the Doubt* does not at all gratify this taste for the heroic, but it does make an audience think. It ran about 100 nights, which is as much as most really good plays can expect to do; it did not take

hold of the average play-going public, nor did it become fashionable. It has never been revived, though it is certainly a play which ought to be acted, and, if we had anything in the nature of a repertory theatre, would be acted frequently.

The opening is quite as clever and even more interesting and entertaining than that of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*. With consummate skill we learn the whole story up to the point at which the play starts from the snatches of conversation in the Emptages' drawing-room while the verdict of the Divorce Court in the action of "Allingham *v.* Allingham, Fraser intervening," is being anxiously awaited. The arrival of successive friends from the court itself keeps the interest strung up to the highest dramatic pitch. By the end of the act we know the outlines of the characters of all the persons who have been introduced, and the development of the *imbroglio* is attended with keen expectation.

The second act certainly does not disappoint us. Theo, when she has left home after her husband's cold refusal to take her view of their position, goes straight to the man from whom she had got the sympathy which she asked in vain from Fraser of Locheen. Her action is wildly indiscreet, but her intentions are the most innocent in the world. All she wants is to borrow enough money to take her abroad, to enable her to join a friend in Paris. At the moment when Allingham receives a note from her asking if he can see her at his Epsom country cottage, he has in the house, not only his wife, who has come to see if some reconciliation can be arranged, but also Mrs Cloys, Sir Fletcher Portwood, and Claude, who have set off for Epsom as soon as Theophila's flight became known. Allingham tells them all what Theo's note says. Mrs Allingham seizes the opportunity at once. If the relations between Jack and Theo were entirely innocent, and if the judge

was right in giving them "the benefit of the doubt," let them prove it now. Let Theo be admitted and let her talk to Jack, imagining they are quite alone, while Mrs Allingham is concealed in the adjoining room. For the sake of peace Allingham consents. Theo's relatives are bundled into the dining-room, Olive takes up her position in the library, and Theo is ushered in.

At first the result of the experiment justifies Allingham in permitting it. Theo explains her position. Her husband, to whom she looked to stand by her, has failed. He doubts her innocence, and, instead of facing the world boldly, he proposes to take her abroad. Therefore she has done with Fraser of Locheen.

"You know," she says, "there's always a moment in the lives of a man and woman who are tied to each other when the man has a chance of making the woman really, really his own property. It's only a moment; if he lets the chance slip it's gone—it never

comes back. I fancy my husband had *his* chance to-day. If he had just put his hand on my shoulder this afternoon and said, 'You fool, you don't deserve it, for your stupidity, but I'll try to save you'; if he had said something, anything of the kind to me, I think I could have gone down on my knees to him and—. But he stared at the carpet and held on to his head and moaned out that he must have time, time!"

What Theo says about her friendship with Jack is more than enough to convince Mrs Allingham, but yet she delays to strike the bell which was to be the sign that she had heard enough. At last Allingham persuades Mrs Fraser, half-fainting as she is, to drink a glass of champagne, and then another. She has eaten nothing all day, she is beside herself with excitement and fatigue, and the wine affects her brain at once. She becomes loud and slangy and confidential as to her future, and then, worked up to a state of delirium, she wildly begs Jack to fly with

her. At this moment her relations, considering that the interview has lasted quite long enough, knock loudly for admittance. Their appearance naturally bewilders Theo, and before she has recovered from this shock she receives another—Mrs Allingham reveals herself. Theo understands the plot that has been laid for her, and her mind gives way. As the curtain descends upon the act she falls in a swoon at Allingham's feet.

It is a situation full of significance, charged with dramatic intensity. The whole act is brilliant in invention and construction, and this scene forms a climax to it that could not be more powerful. It has, however, this one drawback—it makes the writing of the third act an extraordinarily difficult task. The solution of the problem is found eventually, as I have already indicated, by Mrs Cloys, and this solution seemed to many critics to be weak and inconclusive. It is inconclusive, certainly. No play that

deals sincerely with human beings can be brought to a "conclusive" finish unless all the characters are killed off. Nothing in life is ever final — except death. But I cannot see that it is a weak ending. The charge of weakness seems to me to be the direct outcome of the hankering after the heroic which I remarked upon a few pages back. It is a natural ending. It is just such a compromise as the English nature loves in practice, however much it may prefer, in theory, fireworks and the beating of the breast. They are ordinary people, and this is an ordinary expedient for getting them out of their difficulties. One critic whose appreciations, as a rule, are of more than ordinary insight and judgment, made complaint of a falling-off in the last act, and then wrote, as a justification for his discontent: "The author has presented his problem; but not even he can offer a satisfactory solution of it." Surely this is to take a wrong-headed view of the play

altogether. It is not intended by the author to be either a neatly-rounded moral apologue or an ingeniously-solved chess problem. The man who could offer a "satisfactory solution" of any of the real problems of life would be hailed as a great philosopher or the founder of a new religion. To such criticism as this Mr Pinero might well make answer with the King of Israel, "Am I God to kill and to make alive?" All that a dramatist can do is to tear you a page out of life. He is not concerned to get his characters out of all the difficulties into which they are involved. He is the holder of no universal panacea for the misfortunes of the human race. You may, if you like, hold the opinion that neither Theo and Fraser, nor Mrs Allingham and Jack, could ever live happily together. But you must not imagine that Mr Pinero said or thought they could. He does not pretend to leave them in the way of living happily ever after. He merely closes the particular episode in

their history with which his play has been concerned.

I have never heard anyone suggest a more natural or a more effective ending, however much they may have disliked the ending conceived by Mr Pinero. And, whatever has been urged against the conception, I have never heard anyone deny the skilful treatment of the last act of *The Benefit of the Doubt*. The interest is kept up with wonderful dexterity, and though we do not get any further light upon the characters of the four people whose fortunes we follow, yet they all behave as we should expect them to behave, knowing them already as we do. And really, after the two preceding acts, there is nothing more to be done in the way of revealing character. By his daring expedient of the champagne Mr Pinero has opened to us the mind and heart even of the complex Theo, a tawdry little person, as I have said, who might seem at first scarcely worth studying even as a specimen of a large

but not very interesting class. But the dramatist, like the naturalist, can find points of interest in every specimen that he places under the glass. Here, for instance, we have Theo proving to us the eternal truth that between a man and a woman of presentable appearance and of anything like an equal age there can never exist a friendship which lacks altogether the disturbing element of sex. She and Jack Allingham have imagined honestly that "there never was one single thought of anything but friendship on either side." But the something else was there, as it always must be, whether the man and the woman know it or not, and they very often do not know it. This may seem incredible to the people who think that all the mysteries of life can be solved by accepting the basest explanations of them. But it is a fact that must be apparent to anyone who has studied human nature as closely, for example, as Mr Pinero has studied it. As soon as Theo is thrown off her balance the something that

has been at the back of her mind emerges into consciousness. The result is her delirious appeal to Jack. Her husband tells her that she was not herself, that the fatigue of the day and the preceding days, the excitement, the wine, had taken away her real personality. She replies, truly enough, that it was, on the contrary, her real personality which revealed itself. "It was myself, the dregs of myself, that came to the top last night." The revelation is a bitter surprise, but it bids fair to leave a lasting effect for good upon Theo's nature. It is in many a case a sudden illuminating flash like this which alters the whole course of a life. Of course the champagne was a block of offence to numbers of people. The sight of a woman affected by alcohol is so terrible and so revolting that the use of such a device certainly ought to be carefully hedged about. But in this instance the device had a definite purpose to serve, a purpose which could have been achieved by no other means. Further,

it was introduced with so careful a hand and in so artistic a spirit that it could not be regarded as offensive by anyone who judged the play as a whole. Interesting as *The Benefit of the Doubt* is to read, it must be seen upon the stage to be fully appreciated. Yet it has never been acted in London since its original production in 1895. Until we have a theatre which shall form a repertory of pieces, and play them all in turn, adding to them gradually as time goes by, we shall be unable to judge fairly the life work of any British dramatist of our own time. And not only is the student of the drama a loser by the absence of any machinery for keeping modern plays before the world; the dramatist must be sorely hindered and discouraged as well. If his effort is merely to be a nine-days' wonder, to occupy the boards for a season and then to be laid aside and forgotten, how can we expect him to put his best work into it? Must he not trim his sails so as to catch the passing breeze

of popular favour instead of steering such a course as may, if his vessel be seaworthy and built to endure, bring him at last into the Harbour of Lasting Fame? "For a spirit of any delicacy and dignity," wrote Matthew Arnold in his essay on Joubert, "what a fate, if he could foresee it, to be an oracle for one generation and then of little or no account for ever." But what a vastly more despicable fate to entertain a few hundred theatre-fulls of playgoers and then to pass out of mind! How can the theatre expect to attract to its service a sufficient volume of talent to furnish forth a modern English drama? Mr Pinero has done his part well in face of discouragement, but one dramatist cannot make a school any more than one small stream can irrigate a wilderness.

Of Sir Fletcher Portwood I have said a word or two, but not enough to do justice to one of the most comical portraits Mr Pinero has drawn in any of his plays. Sir

Fletcher is a perpetual joy. His cheery self-assertion and pomposity are hit off to the life. What a delicious scene that is in which he explains the true inwardness of his niece's acquittal.

MRS TWELVES. It has been awfully reassuring to see you beaming in court, Sir Fletcher.

SIR FLETCHER. Ha! I daresay my attitude has been remarked. Beaming? Why not? I've had no doubt as to the result.

MRS TWELVES. No doubt of Theo's innocence—of course not.

SIR FLETCHER. Innocent; that goes without saying—my niece. But the result, in any case, would have been much the same, I venture to think.

MRS TWELVES. Really?

SIR FLETCHER. You see, my own public position, if I may speak of it—

MRS TWELVES. Oh, yes.

SIR FLETCHER (*smiling*). And I happen to know the judge—slightly perhaps; but there it is.

MRS TWELVES. But judges are not influenced by considerations of that kind?

SIR FLETCHER. Heaven forbid I should say a word against our method of administering law in this country. The House knows my opinion of the English Judicial Bench. At the same time judges are mortal—I have never concealed that from myself; and Sir William and I have met. (*To Claude.*) You saw the judge look at me this morning, Claude?

CLAUDE. No.

SIR FLETCHER. No? Oh, yes, and I half smiled in return. Yesterday I couldn't catch his eye, but to-day I've been half smiling at him all through the proceedings.

Again, Sir Fletcher's fussy anxiety in the last act to "arbitrate" between the husbands and the wives is vastly entertaining. He is a recognisable figure in modern life, this respectable nonentity, who began to "apply the lever to the mountain" at an early age, and who ends with a seat in Parliament and a knighthood. Thus he is not only amusing but a valuable record of a contemporary type. Claude Emptage is very humorously sketched in also, and is equally true to life. He has all his uncle's sense of self-importance without the pushing energy which has made Sir Fletcher's position.

All through the play one is struck by Mr Pinero's knowledge of stage effect and of the thousand little ways in which a dramatist can keep his audience interested and in a good humour. Even when he introduces a servant for no more than a moment he can

contrive to suggest character and to create amusement without hindering the development of the plot or deliberately turning aside to be funny. Consider the manservant Quaife, for example. His wife is "exceedingly healthy for a stout person"; the boy is not ready to carry bags to the station, but he "can be worried till he's ready." This may be called the mint and anise and cummin of play-writing, scarcely worth mentioning in comparison with the weightier matters of the dramatist's art. But it all has its effect in building up a solid impression and creating an atmosphere of reality.

There will, to revert for a moment to the main current of the play, be always people who shrink from looking upon the petty tragedies of life with the satirist's eye. Such people, while they are filled with admiration for *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*, find in *The Benefit of the Doubt* a flavour that grates upon their palate. The same people would no doubt call Thackeray

"cynical," as the fashion goes in words. They would avow their liking for plays either avowedly comic and light-hearted, or else cast throughout in a serious mould. But they forget that life is of a tangled web, good and ill together, serious and comic elements inextricably interwoven, and that often we know not whether to laugh or to cry at the fantastic tricks of our fellow-creatures. Merely to laugh at the troubles of the Frasers and the Allinghams would be to bring our merriment under the sentence of Solomon: 'twould be but the crackling of thorns under the pot. And yet to deal in a tragic spirit with Theo and her husband would be to dignify them unduly, and would point to faulty perspective in a dramatist's mental picture of life. They have their moments of exaltation, as Becky Sharp and Rawdon, for example, have theirs. Rawdon rises to moral grandeur when he flings the jewel at Lord Steyne. Every now and then Becky reveals some trait that seems to put

her whole character on a higher plane. We forget Theo's tawdry nature when she falls senseless after realising the full extent of her half-delirious indiscretions at the Epsom cottage. But it showed a just estimate, on Mr Pinero's part, of the theme dealt with in *The Benefit of the Doubt* that he treated it in the vein of satire. He lost nothing of the humanity of his characters, nothing of the interest of their story. He tore a leaf out of the Book of the Age. He exhibited at once his surpassing skill as a maker of plays and the fruits of his labour as a student of human character.

In both these respects *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* fell short of *The Benefit of the Doubt*. The first two acts and half the third are written with a firm grip upon reality and a keen literary instinct as well. But after that the play falls to pieces. The lesser characters are exceedingly well sketched in. The Duke of St Olpherts is drawn in a vein of literary sarcasm, but he is true in essence

and also very amusing. The English parson is (contrary to the custom of our stage) not in any way exaggerated or held up to cheap ridicule. His sister, Mrs Thorpe, is a woman who, in the hands of most playwrights, would have been a prig; as it is, she is sympathetic, natural, lovable. The persons who merely appear and disappear have each a subtle flavour of individuality. In 1895 Ibsen had begun to be generally recognised in this country as a master of dramatic craft, and *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* shows more than any other of the plays the influence of Ibsen, and especially the influence of Ibsen's studies in femininity. Even Mrs Thorpe's fancy about her little boy's grave—"You know I still tuck my child up at night-time, still have my last peep at him before going to my own bed; and it is awful to listen to these cold rains drip, drip, drip upon that little green coverlet of his"—even that reminds us of Agnes in *Brand* placing her candle in the window so

that its light may fall across the snow on her boy's grave and give him a gleam of Christmas comfort. But the scene in which Agnes hurls the Bible into the stove and then snatches it again is very far from the method of the Norwegian master. Nothing in the character of Agnes has prepared us for it, nor does the ending of the play seem any more natural. If Agnes had ever been convinced that she was grievously wronging Mrs Lucas Cleeve by keeping Lucas away from her, she would surely have gone back to her old lonely life. Women of her temperament do not fall back upon the consolations of religious faith, because they have never found in religion anything to console them. It is true that Agnes's sex has found her out, as she says, in one direction ; but there is no reason to suppose that, because a thwarted instinct takes its revenge, the mental habits of a lifetime would give place to an attitude of mind to which she has never been anything but a complete stranger. There is

nothing wonderful in the mutual confession of Theophila and Jack Allingham that, in their distress, they have gone back to the habit of prayer, for with them praying, or "saying their prayers," had once been a habit, and the mind slips back easily, under stress of pain or deep emotion, into grooves that have been formed in the impressionable early years of life. But Agnes Ebbsmith's father "believed in nothing that people who go to church are credited with believing in," and he brought her up to take his view of existence and of the world around her. When she cries out that she had trusted in the Bible and clung to it, and that it failed her, we feel that this must be some other woman who has strayed into the piece in order to help the author towards a striking finish to his third act. This is not the Mrs Ebbsmith we have known up to that point. And we are sorely disappointed, for up to that point Mrs Ebbsmith has aroused our intense interest and has seemed to be the

finest, most complex study of womanhood under the conditions of to-day that Mr Pinero or any other modern playwright has drawn for us.

In essence, *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* enforces the same lesson as *The Benefit of the Doubt*—the lesson that a platonic relation between a man and a woman is impossible for nine out of every ten women and for ninety-nine out of every hundred men. The lesson is, of course, weakened a little from one side by making Lucas so poor a creature; but this, on the other hand, puts the woman's infatuation in a more striking light. Again, if the man in the case had been drawn as an exception to all ordinary rules in the opposite sense to Lucas, he would have been railed at as unnatural—and also there would have been no play! Even as it is there is scarcely a complete play, for such a subject cannot be fully discussed before a mixed theatre-full of men and women of all ages. It is not, therefore, I think,

quite a suitable subject for drama under present conditions. When Agnes resolves that, if she cannot keep Lucas by her side in her way, she will descend to his level and hold him by the power that all women can exercise over men, enough is said to leave half of the spectators mystified and the other half uncomfortable. Yet the situation is not really made clear, for the reason that it must remain obscure without the addition of what has to be left unsaid. It is really the whole mystery of the sex relation that we are invited to ponder. This is too large a subject for the theatre to tackle all at once in its present stage of development.

For this very reason, however, *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* with all its defects as drama is more stimulating to thought than any other of Mr Pinero's plays. Just because it casts into the arena of discussion a subject so important to nearly all the men and women in the world, it gives us fruitful matter for reflection, a mental cud to chew

for so long as we choose to let our minds work upon it. Agnes tried to persuade herself that she was one of the exceptional women to whom this subject is unimportant. The process of her undeceiving provides the stuff of the drama. When she finds that this weak, vain, egotistical Lucas has no idea of finding in her merely an intellectual comrade, a spiritual affinity, does she at once renounce their compact of partnership? Her head resents the intrusion of the flesh-and-blood element, but her heart holds her back from any attempt at renunciation. Lucas's feeling towards her is the outcome of passion. She has learnt to love him with the self-denying tenderness that seeks rather to offer service than to extract gratification. The greatest sacrifice that a woman like Agnes can make is the sacrifice of her convictions and ideals. Her love for Lucas persuades her to throw them over at the very first thought of the possibility of her losing him. The Duke of St Olpherts

verifies, in his brutally frank manner, the impression of Lucas's character which has been gradually forcing itself upon Agnes. She sees that there is nothing for it but to surrender her own and to accept Lucas's standpoint. She is not the woman to be content with half-measures. Her mind is made up quickly, and she acts at once upon her determination. The dress that Lucas has ordered for her comes into her thoughts. Only an hour before she has expressed her disgust at the idea of wearing it. Recollect her conversation about it with Lucas.

AGNES. And when would you have me hang this on my bones?

LUCAS. Oh, when we are dining, or—

AGNES. Dining in a public place?

LUCAS. Why not look your best in a public place?

AGNES. Look my best! You know I don't think of this sort of garment in connection with our companionship, Lucas.

LUCAS. It is not an extraordinary garment for a lady.

AGNES. Rustle of silk, glare of arms and throat—they belong, in my mind, to such a very different order of things from that we have set up.

An hour afterwards she has realised clearly the only condition upon which she can hold Lucas to her. It revolts her to submit to it, but she has no choice. She puts on the dress that has aroused her scorn; she transforms herself from a dowd into a beautiful woman. The effect upon Lucas is immediate. At first he cannot understand the sudden alteration in her appearance.

LUCAS. Why, what has brought about this change in you?

AGNES. What?

LUCAS. What?

AGNES. I know—

LUCAS. You know?

AGNES. Exactly how you regard me.

LUCAS. I don't understand you.

AGNES. Listen. Long ago, in Florence, I began to suspect that we had made a mistake, Lucas. Even there I began to suspect that your nature was not one to allow you to go through life sternly, severely, looking upon me more and more each day as a fellow-worker and less and less as a woman. I suspected this—oh, proved it! but still made myself believe that this companionship of ours would gradually become in a sense colder—more temperate, more impassive. (*Beating her brow.*) Never! never! Oh, a few minutes ago this man,

who means to part us if he can, drew your character, disposition, in a dozen words.

LUCAS. You believe *him!* You credit what *he* says of me!

AGNES. I declared it to be untrue. Oh, but—

LUCAS. But—but—!

AGNES. The picture he paints of you is not wholly a false one. S-s-sh! Lucas. Hark! attend to me! I resign myself to it all. Dear, I must resign myself to it!

LUCAS. Resign yourself? Has life with me become so distasteful?

AGNES. Has it? Think! Why, when I realised the actual conditions of our companionship—why didn't I go on my own way stoically? Why don't I go at this moment?

LUCAS. You really love me, do you mean—as simple, tender women are content to love? (*She looks at him, nods slowly, then turns away and droops over the table. He raises her and takes her in his arms.*) My dear girl, my dear, cold, warm-hearted girl! Ha! You couldn't bear to see me packed up in one of the Duke's travelling boxes and borne back to London, eh? (*She shakes her head; her lips form the word "No."*) No fear of that, my —my sweetheart!

AGNES. Quick, dress, take me out. . . . I won't oppose you, I won't repel you any more.

It is a powerful, pitiful scene this. It is the tragedy of the exceptional woman's life. Few women, luckily for themselves, luckily for the continuance of the human race, are born like Agnes Ebbsmith. There are two

ways of love—the man's and the woman's—though sometimes we see the positions reversed—the woman, masterful, passionate; the man, patient, tender, serviceable. But the two ways in their extremes are seldom brought to a clash so violently as they are in the case of Lucas Cleeve and Agnes Ebbsmith. Seldom is so complete a sacrifice of inclination and ideal called for as that which this scene presents to us.

This is a tragedy in itself, this surrender of the higher nature to the lower, the failure of a strong soul to escape from the common burdens of humanity. But there is an even more poignant sequel. For no sooner has the sacrifice been offered than Agnes finds that it has been ineffectual as a means of binding more closely to her the man who pretends to love her—who honestly believes that he loves her, so low is his conception of the tie that means so much to her. A proposal is made that he shall consent to a feigned reconciliation with his wife in

order that her position may be regulated and that he may resume his political career. His relations with Agnes are to continue as little changed as need be, but the situation is to be saved in the world's eyes and a scandal avoided. Of course, Agnes expects that Lucas will repudiate this degrading suggestion with anger and contempt. But the wretched creature shows only too evidently that he would grasp at it if he dared. This is the final disillusioning touch, and, unfortunately, it is here that we get our final glimpse of the real Mrs Ebbsmith in Mr Pinero's play. We can all form our own notions of the further development of the situation at which we have arrived towards the close of the third act. Of one thing we may feel, I think, certain: that the end which Mr Pinero gave us is neither likely nor convincing, and that nothing in the play has prepared us for so strange and seemingly unnatural a conclusion. Even Mrs Thorpe startles us towards the end of

the third act with a sudden declaration that she too had an unhappy married life — a declaration which was perhaps needed in order to lead up to the Bible-burning episode, but which is so unexpected as to be almost laughable. One cannot but feel that the agony of unfortunate marriages is being piled up a little too high. It is a thousand pities that a drama of sincere analysis and great power, such as we find in the earlier part of the play, should remain merely a torso, a fragment, instead of growing under the dramatist's hand into a coherent and satisfying finished work of art.

IX

MANNERS AND MORALS

Up to 1899, then, Mr Pinero had written four plays of serious intent, all dealing with the relations between men and women. Two of them showed how impossible it is for a man or a woman to get rid of the burden of an evil past. The other two pointed out the obstacles that lie in the way of mere friendship between the sexes. So far Mr Pinero seemed to have based his serious work upon a settled view of life and human nature—a sound view, a broad view, a view that experience and intuition alike supported. But in 1899 came *The Gay Lord Quex*. The theory of Mr Pinero's "settled view" seemed to be overturned. Most people could see no sign in this

brilliantly-clever play of anything but an anxiety to make the most of exceptionally interesting dramatic material. If *The Gay Lord Quex* expressed any view at all, it appeared to be a view directly opposite to that which its author expounded in *The Profligate*. Here was Quex—"the wickedest man in London," according to Sophy Fullgarney, who knows most things—able to shake off his burden of loose living and settle down, apparently a model husband, with "the typical creamy English girl," Muriel Eden. He has "reformed," it is true, but so had Dunstan Renshaw. He is genuinely in love, but Renshaw's passion was no less genuine. All the force that there was in Mr Pinero's handling of *The Profligate* theme seemed to be dissipated by the manner in which he treated the same subject in *The Gay Lord Quex*. But was this the final word on the subject? How if the object of the latter play was to show what a low tone of morals and manners

prevailed in Society at the close of the nineteenth century? How if the whole piece was conceived in a mood of bitter irony? "If it were so," you may reply, "there would surely be one character to act the part of the ancient chorus; to indicate, not necessarily by words, but by general attitude of mind, that the author's purpose was satire; to represent a higher type than the Quexes and the Fraynes and the Bastlings and the Mrs Jack Edens of this world. For dramatic purposes we must have contrast, and that is just what we miss in *The Gay Lord Quex.*" There is weight in these arguments, I admit, but I am inclined to believe—I wish to believe—that they can be answered. Look at the plays of the eighteenth-century dramatists. They are valuable beyond compare as evidence of the prevailing tone of the age in which they were written. Is it not at least possible that Mr Pinero set himself the task of drawing a picture of decadent

Society as it appeared to him, and leaving the spectators each to draw the moral for himself? It is true *The Gay Lord Quex* gives us the unpleasant sensation of having passed an evening with a collection of people whom we dislike and despise. But is not that just the impression which Mr Pinero intended it to produce? He takes a theatre-full of people, five-sixths of whom are dominated by an absurd reverence for rank and fashion, and he shows them how exceedingly unpleasant people of rank and fashion can be; he shows that (to amplify a verdict said to have been passed by one ornament of Society upon another in recent years) they have the manners of organ-grinders and the morals of monkeys. Naturally, then, in such a play as this we miss any appeal to the heart. It makes its appeal entirely to the head. There is no one with whom we really sympathise, except, perhaps, the dear old lady whose hospitality and confidence are so shamefully

abused. Muriel Eden is a featureless Society doll, with just enough cunning to carry on an intrigue, even after she is engaged to Quex, with a young man of whom she knows nothing. As for Captain Bastling, the young man in question, we know that he is stupid, and we are told that he is immoral—a very unattractive combination. Mr Pinero, by the way, has a poor opinion of young men. Renshaw, Ardale, Bastling, Denstroude, all are of the same vicious type, and naturally enough they develop into the Quexes and the Fraynes and the Peter Jarmans and the St Olphertses of middle and later life. As for Sophy Fullgarney, she is a wonderfully interesting study, but Quex is right when he calls her, in his elegant way, "a low spy, an impudent, bare-faced liar, a common kitchen-cat who wriggles into the best rooms, gets herself fondled, and then spits." Quex is interesting, too, but he is three parts a cad, as well as a hunter after sordid,

commonplace adventures, lacking the excuse even of romance or passion.

Consider the course of the plot for a moment. Sophy, the New Bond Street manicurist, is Muriel Eden's foster-sister. She is capable, common to a degree in manner and mind, warm-hearted, excitable. She is the daughter of a bailiff on the Eden estates, but her character is that of a typical London *gamine.* The Edens have set her up in Bond Street (which shows an amazing ignorance on their part of the usual nature of the manicuring industry), and the two girls have kept up their childish affection. When the Marquess of Quex, with a reputation that is only faintly adumbrated by the epithet gay, has offered himself, at the age of forty-eight, and been accepted by Muriel under pressure of her family, Sophy is sorely troubled at the thought of "her darling" being sacrificed to an old rake. She determines to catch Quex tripping if she can, for Muriel, who has listened to

squalid records of her future husband's "gaieties," avows that "if she found him up to anything of the sort now," she would break off her engagement and marry Bastling. But Quex is not to be caught by the pretty manicurist's sly blandishments. "A kiss or a squeeze of the waist—anything of that sort" would do, but Sophy looks and sighs and pouts all in vain. This method failing, she will spy upon him and find out whether any other succeeds where she has failed. Soon she does find something out. The Duchess of Strood, a foolish, extravagantly sentimental creature of thirty-seven, has been one of Lord Quex's *chères amies*, and, much to his annoyance, she demands a farewell scene. She is staying with Quex's aunt at Richmond, and for some unaccountable reason he consents to "a parting in keeping with their great attachment" in the boudoir adjoining her bedroom late at night. By chance Sophy, who has been allowed to

spend an afternoon in the grounds, overhears enough to guess that something of the kind is intended, and her suspicions are strengthened when the Duchess announces that she has had to send her maid home. She rises to the occasion and offers to take the absent maid's place. Then, of course, all happens in due course. Quex goes to the Duchess's apartments merely to return her presents, and presently Sophy is discovered at the keyhole.

The scene which follows between Quex and the girl who is determined to ruin his chance with Miss Eden is the most ingenious Mr Pinero has ever written. The Duchess has been sent away by Quex to share a friend's room on pretence of "nerves." He remains—to try and save her reputation, even if he cannot mend his own. His offers of money are scornfully rejected. Sophy will tell all she knows (which is not much, for Quex has been ice to his old flame's blandishments) and dis-

close the damning fact of his midnight visit. Quex's next move is more effective than the attempt to buy silence. He has locked the doors of the rooms, and he declares that if Sophy denounces him she shall denounce herself too. She may rouse the house, but the Duchess is safe; Sophy and Quex will be found alone. Her story will not be believed. Her character will be gone. Neither her rage nor her appeals have any effect. At last, in her dread of such an exposure (which would also mean the ending of her own engagement to a Bond Street palmist) the girl consents to hold her tongue. She is made to write a letter which puts her in Quex's power if ever he should produce it, and she turns to go. But suddenly the thought of Muriel comes into her head. "Why, it's like selling Muriel!" she cries. "Just to get myself out of this I'm simply handing her over to you! I won't do it! I won't!" And she pulls violently at the bell. Her sudden, self-sacrificing change of front has

a remarkable effect on the man. Mumbling words of admiration, he thrusts the letter into her hand, unlocks the door leading to her bedroom, and flings it open. But first the awakened servants at the other door must be dismissed with some explanation of the loud ringing. A message about the Duchess's letters in the morning is invented by Quex, and when Sophy, all unnerved and almost hysterical, has repeated it and totters across the room, he speaks in an altered tone. "Be off," he says kindly, "go to bed. Serve me how you please. Miss Fullgarney, upon my soul I—I humbly beg your pardon." And the curtain falls on Sophy's "God bless you. You're a gentleman! I'll do what I can for you!"

No one, however much they disliked the piece as a whole, could deny the great power and grip of this remarkable scene. Given the characters of Quex and Sophy, it is thoroughly natural, full of observation and of absorbing interest. No one who saw

it on the night of the first performance, when the house was in the dark as to how the scene would end, is likely to forget the intensity with which it was followed, or the outburst of applause, of pent-up excitement and admiration, at the close of the act. Nothing more ingenious in this kind, nothing cleverer, has been written by an English playwright since Sheridan wrote the screen scene in *The School for Scandal.*

After this nothing remains but to get Bastling out of the way, and this is accomplished by Sophy without any difficulty at all. She has somehow or other overlooked this delightful young man's real character. Quex tells her, however, that "he's just what I was at eight-and-twenty —what I was—and worse," and Sophy now determines to apply to him the same test by which Quex's fidelity to Muriel was proved. Bastling falls into the trap at once. Her suggestion that she would

appreciate "a little more than plain thanks" for her help to him and to Muriel, leads to a kiss. Muriel is a witness, and Bastling hurries out like a whipped dog. So far as the audience has had its sympathies aroused at all, they are now with Quex, and the curtain falls upon the prospect of Muriel's early marriage to him.

No romance here, and, according to my view, no suggestion of romance intended. Just a picture of the way in which marriage was regarded and everyday life in London lived at the end of the nineteenth century. Not a pleasant picture, not a picture that makes us feel more reconciled to the ugliness of life, but one that may brace us up, nevertheless, by bringing us face to face with facts, and filling us with a healthy disgust of the kind of world in which the Quexes and the Sophy Fullgarneys live and move and have their restless, worthless being. If a poet (and dramatists are poets, even though they never write verse) can make us

face life with renewed confidence and vitality, and can tune our minds to

> "Oh! world as God has made it,
> All is beauty,"

he is beyond question a benefactor to his age. But as our bodies sometimes need unpleasant medicine—medicine which perhaps makes us worse before we are better—so do our minds now and then require an astringent tonic, some plain presentment of unpleasant facts that pulls us up short and sets us thinking of the goal whither we tend. Such a tonic was *The Gay Lord Quex*. I am afraid most people regarded it merely in the light of an exciting entertainment, akin to lion-taming or walking the slack wire, a performance that stirred their sluggish interest and helped them to get through an evening without being bored. That is why, even though I cling to the hope that Mr Pinero meant it to be something more than this, I am sorry that a serious purpose was not more definitely indicated.

Now, in *Iris* a serious purpose was indicated beyond all doubt. Everyone is agreed upon that—even the casual playgoer who pronounced it dull. But as soon as you inquire what Mr Pinero's purpose was, agreement vanishes: a hundred voices offer a hundred varying explanations. Here is one apologist inviting you to consider Mrs Bellamy the victim of circumstances. The fate of Iris, he cries, might be the fate of any moderately good woman against whom chance and Mr Frederick Maldonado incessantly warred. That acute student, Mr W. L. Courtney, tells us that Iris is merely weak, not wicked, and that Mr Pinero meant to show how wrong it is to let oneself drift, or to be too fond of soft cushions and the sunny side of the Street of Human Life. A third suggestion is that Iris is a thoroughly bad woman. A fourth, that she is at heart a thoroughly good woman, sorely sinned against. And so on to the hundredth, possibly beyond.

After studying the play with care, both in the theatre and from the printed page, I think there can be no doubt that Iris is a worthless woman, weak, self-indulgent, and incapable of appreciating what is right and what wrong; not an immoral woman, but a non-moral, one who lacks both the will-power and the intelligence to grasp even the outlines of morality. She seems to be in this respect intended as a contrast to Mrs Tanqueray, and, even more so, to Agnes Ebbsmith. Both Paula and Agnes knew well enough when they were so acting as to be true to themselves, to the better instincts of their natures. When they were false to those instincts they were deliberately false. They allowed their passions or their worse instincts to carry them away with a full knowledge that they must in some way pay the price for self-indulgence. Of such natures is the stuff of drama compounded. In a play you want a conflict between the force of will and some opposing force, it may

chance of nature or of some other will. Your characters must know their own minds. They must aim at something, whether a good end or a bad. In the larger drama of existence, also, the men and women who play the prominent parts are those who of set purpose shape means to ends. Of the nerveless, the undetermined, nothing is to be hoped. The world has no use for them. If a man or a woman is wicked energetically, and deliberately chooses to be wicked, there is a chance that some day they may alter their line of conduct and may benefit Society instead of harming it.

> "They say best men are moulded out of faults,
> And oftentimes become much more the better
> For being a little bad."

Much better have them in your community than people who are merely good from unthinking habit, and who, if it became fashionable to lie and steal, would eschew truth and honesty as readily as they now profess these virtues. The bitterest fate of

all in Dante's *Inferno* was reserved for the souls of those

"Che visser senza infamia e senza lodo,"

who in their lives earned neither praise nor blame. Heaven cast them forth lest they should stain its fair courts; Hell would have none of them, for even in Hell the wicked would have taken place above them.

"Questi non hanno speranza di morte,
E la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa
Che invidiosi son d'ogni altra sorte." [1]

Among these wretched spirits Dante would, I fancy, have placed the soul of Iris Bellamy. She answers to the letter his description of the feeble folk resembling "that caitiff choir of angels who are neither rebels nor God's faithful servants, but thought of their own selfish interests alone."

Observe how this selfishness colours every act of Iris Bellamy's life. She cannot make

[1] "These have no hope of death, and their blind life so meanly drags that they are envious of every other fate."

up her mind to marry Laurence Trenwith, because she loses her fortune if she marries again. Yet she feels that if she is left to herself she is in danger of marrying him and so becoming poor. What does she do? Stiffen her resolution and stand firm? No, she decides to accept an offer of marriage from Maldonado, her millionaire admirer. She does not love him—she does not like him even, as a lover. But he is rich, and her engagement sets up a barrier between Laurence and herself. Well, at all events, she has taken a step—I had nearly written a decisive step—but it is only decisive until she next sees Laurence alone, which is a few hours later. Looking into his eyes, feeling his kiss hot upon her lips, she casts away her anchor, breaks her word to Maldonado, and accepts Trenwith as a lover. She will not have a poor man for a husband, but she has no objection to making this young man play an unpleasantly equivocal part, no reluctance to become his mistress.

The boy, however, has a sense of what befits a man. He cannot earn a living at home. His only chance is to farm in Canada. Iris is incapable of understanding why he declines to live upon her money, equally unable to see why he will not agree to accept "some suitable occupation in town," a secretaryship, for instance, that imaginary refuge of the incapable and the unlucky—"the sort of billet," as Laurence says, "that provides a man with gloves and cab fares, and a flower for his coat." She has no conception of the feelings that spur a man on to be independent and to make a place for himself in the world. She has always taken, as they came, the good things with which from childhood Fortune has furnished her; has always been profuse, extravagant, with money earned by other people. Why should Laurence insist upon talking about "that terrible ranche" at Chilcoten? What does his career matter? Why cannot he snuggle down comfortably, as she has done, and make an ignoble ease his only

aim in life? "Another time" is her cry when he speaks of the possibility of her joining him on the ranche and becoming his wife. "Let us discuss the point another time."

Before "another time" arrives, the news comes that Iris has lost her fortune. Her solicitor and trustee has fled, leaving ruin behind him (a timely hit this, in 1901). All that is left to her is a beggarly £150 a year. Surely she need not any longer stand out against Laurence's pleading. There is no reason whatever why she should. He offers her independence and a home, not luxurious, but as comfortable as she can make in England on her £150 a year; and if she loves him, as she protests—but is it a case of the lady protesting too much? She does, it is true, announce her engagement to Trenwith immediately, but she will not go to Canada with him. He can make a home and come back for her in a few years' time. Evidently she counts unconsciously upon something

better turning up in the meantime—thinks, perhaps, that her £150 will go some way towards comfort in cheap *pensions* (she knows little enough about them!)—shrinks, at any-rate, from the idea of the ranche. But of course she does not put it in this way, even to herself. She persuades herself that she is acting nobly. She tells Laurence that he would despise her if he recollected that she declined to marry him when she was well-off—

"that it wasn't until I was poor—almost as poor as yourself—that I would marry you; and that then I promptly hung myself round your neck like a stone."

And to Laurence, reminding her that, whenever she joins him, she will still be a poor woman, she talks in this exalted strain. She will go to him

"after I have had my own struggle, my own battle with poverty, singly, alone; after I have proved to you that I can live patiently, uncomplainingly, without luxury, willingly relinquishing costly pleasures, content with the barest comfort—yes, yes, after I have shown you that there are other and better and deeper qualities

in my nature than you have suspected, than I myself have suspected—then, then I'll join you, Laurie."

She deceives herself, she deceives her lover, she deceives her friends. And when a woman of this character begins to suffer from the delusion that there are hidden depths of gold in the trashy ore of her nature, she becomes more dangerous than ever. This is the mood in which she works the most complete destruction.

One friend, however, is not deceived. Maldonado knows pretty well the nature of the woman in whose pursuit the sting of passion keeps him steadfast. He plays the part of the magnanimous friend, takes Laurence under his especial care, sees him off with false good-nature and a devilish chuckle, then goes back to bid Iris farewell, and to leave with her a cheque-book that she can use at will. She protests that she will never use it, is angered when he insists upon leaving it for her to destroy. A sudden need for money to satisfy a generous impulse sends

her to it—thoughtlessly perhaps. Yet, when she realises that she has used one of "Maldo's" cheques, she does not tear it up. Nor, when the servant comes to take her dressing-bag, does she forget to drop the cheque-book into it. And then, of course, "almost from the very moment of my receiving it, my hand accustomed itself to scrawling cheques for one object and another" until the account considerately opened by Maldonado is overdrawn. This naturally enough brings Maldo to her side, "pocket-book in hand." But the repulsion he excites is still strong enough to stimulate her to flight. Then follows a period of poverty. Why does not Iris write to Trenwith to say that she is in dire need? It is hard to say. Mr Pinero offers us no help. Perhaps she still calculated on "something turning up." No doubt the idea of the ranche was still distasteful. She thought at first she could live upon her friends. But they turned their backs upon her, all but Maldonado. He fur-

nished a flat close to his house in Mount Street. He kept it ready for occupation at any moment. He was always on the look-out for the tenant he meant to have. And one evening, when Iris was at her last shilling almost, he met her and gave her the key, and she—she used it.

Thus the fourth act of the play shows Iris in this flat with Maldonado still her lover, more her lover than ever, it seems; for he is urging her to marry him and to accept a settled position. He admits that he has "treated her a bit roughly," and frankly owns that he meant to have his revenge, if he could get it, "for her caprice in throwing him over for a lover." Now he is anxious "to make it up to her." But Iris still dreams of the time for Trenwith's return. It does not occur to her that the altered state of her life will alter Laurie's love for her or interfere with their plans. By this time he must have made a fairly comfortable home. She will be delighted to leave Maldonado and to

go away with the man she loves. So she puts Maldo off, asks for time, promises to think it over. A few minutes later comes the one old friend who has been faithful with the news that Trenwith is back in England. Her instant thought is that the old friend shall act as a go-between. Her undeveloped moral sense sees no reason why he should dislike the office. His protest she meets with an air of pained surprise. In the end, however, he undertakes to let Trenwith know where she is. The same evening Trenwith appears, and Iris stammers out her story. She is plainly incapable of perceiving anything in it except that she has had an unpleasant time and deserves sympathy. When Laurence has heard her to the end and, murmuring incoherent words, takes up his hat and coat, she finds it hard to believe that he intends to leave her. Even then she cannot see things as they are. It is "the little good in her that has proved her downfall." It was her love for Laurence

that prompted her first downward step. So she discovers her excuses. But they are powerless to stay Trenwith's steps. He stumbles out, dazed with the shame and distress of her story, and then comes Maldonado, wild with rage, having discovered his mistress's deceit and heard all from the neighbouring room. His first impulse is to kill her, but he subdues it and turns her out into the night. And, when she has gone, his wild anger returns, and the curtain falls upon him as he breaks everything within his reach.

"Not an edifying story" was the general verdict, but no doubt a lifelike picture. It lacked some of its likeness to life on the stage, because Iris was played by an actress unsuited to the part. Miss Fay Davis was unequal to realising such a character as that of Iris. Her *ingénue* moods and graces were irritating; they stood between the audience and the dramatist's intention. At least this is the impression that a reading of the play

leaves on the mind. It is essentially a study of one woman, and it demands a really great actress to interpret it—an actress who can express experience and intuition in terms of emotion. Mr Pinero concentrated all his effort upon the portrayal of Iris, and his effort has lost half its effect, so far as the theatre is concerned, because it was not seconded by his chief player. The minor characters have less to do in this than in any other of the dramas we have been considering. The actual writing is simpler. The play contains few of these biting phrases that stick in the memory and show us the value to a playwright of a pretty wit aided by a full notebook. It is not even constructed with Mr Pinero's usual deftness. There is one piece of extremely clever stagecraft—the scene in which Maldonado finds the fragments of a letter that tells him of Trenwith's intended visit to Iris. By making him put the fragments together, and then silently extract the latch-key from an ornament

where he has placed it just before, the author conveys to the audience, without a word spoken, the nature of the development they are to expect. The scene which shows the reception of the news that Mr Archie Keen, the well-known solicitor, has decamped is very naturally conceived and written too. But, taken as a whole, the piece cannot be considered to represent worthily Mr Pinero's standard of craftsmanship. The division of acts into scenes; the long interval which the spectator's imagination has to bridge over between the end of the third act, when Iris begins her life of hardship, tempered by Maldo's cheque-book, and the opening of the fourth, which shows her in Maldo's flat; the sketchy treatment of side issues—all are signs that the author's interest was in the play of character alone. And it was a masterly study of character that he gave us, even though *Iris* be not a masterly play. It is, it seems to me, the one play which he has written rather in order to follow out his

own interest in his subject than to make an effective stage-piece. In each of the others he sacrificed something in order to be dramatic. In *Iris* it was drama that went by the board. We must look to Mr Pinero's future for a work that shall be, like *Iris*, the result of keen interest in some particular problem of character, and which shall, at the same time, be constructed with the ingenuity and the apt employment of convention that must go to the making of a perfect play. It was said that after *Iris* Mr Pinero had no intention to write more serious plays. The announcement was, of course, very wide of the mark. If we had no other indication that Mr Pinero feels within his mind the seeds of many other such works, we have at anyrate the closing words of his introduction to Mr W. L. Courtney's interesting and illuminating essay on "The Idea of Tragedy" (1900): "And now, my dear Courtney, you tell us you perceive signs encouraging you to hope that the tragic idea

may yet find fruitful stimulus in the great tumult of imperial emotions at present stirring the world-spirit of our peoples. With all my heart I trust it may prove so; and that we poor modern playwrights will not be found wanting, at least in the endeavour to respond to lofty and heroic inspiration."

X

MR PINERO'S ACTORS

A FEW words in conclusion about the actors and actresses who have helped to interpret Mr Pinero's plays to the world of theatre-goers and who have been helped by him to take leading rank in their profession. The benefit is mutual. A dramatist must have players of ability to act his plays, and players must find clever inventors of character if they are to exhibit their ability to the best advantage. Mr Pinero, like Dr Ibsen, is an actor's dramatist. His plays never fail to offer to his players notable opportunities for the exercise of their art. All intelligent actors and actresses will tell you that

it is a pleasure to perform in the plays of a man who is at once a student of humanity and a master of stage-craft; that it is a task akin to the making of bricks without straw to aim at putting life into the stiff motions and awkward phrases of a mere stage-puppet. There have been players, it is true, who have taken more pleasure in filling out and in endowing with a semblance of life some figure of straw, imitated abominably from nature by a hack play-maker, than in carrying out the intention of a clever dramatist. But these are nowadays of an elder fashion. Note how eager our best-graced actors and actresses are to act the characters of Ibsen. See how many reputations Mr Pinero has helped to make. The persons in his plays are so real that in many cases they "play themselves," as the phrase goes. To adopt another idiom, they are "actor-proof parts." Failure in them is scarcely possible. I have often been struck by this very great

merit in Mr Pinero's plays when understudies have been playing leading parts, or when I have seen provincial companies performing them. Two or three Paula Tanquerays, notably Miss Granville's (though not Mrs Kendal's), were worthy to be placed alongside of Mrs Patrick Campbell's. No one has ever failed to get an immense amount of fun out of the Magistrate, or the Dean of St Marvell's, or Dick Phenyl. On the other hand, the parts written specially for Mrs John Wood are by no means for every talent. Can one ever forget her "George Tid" in *Dandy Dick?* Yet Miss Violet Vanbrugh, with all her distinction and cleverness, was never the real sportswoman for a moment; she was a charming woman of the womanly type pretending to be mannish and horsey, just as Miss Ellen Terry in *Madame Sans-gêne* is a delightful, refined, captivating creature trying to persuade us that she is a vulgar washerwoman. Madame Réjane

is, for the time being, the very person whom history and M. Sardou have invented; Mrs John Wood was the actual "George Tid" of Mr Pinero's brain.

The notable acting quality in Mr Pinero's work was noticeable very early in his career. *The Money-Spinner*, with its deft and vigorous characterisation, has attracted a whole generation of amateurs. *The Squire* found Mrs Kendal, no bad judge of an effective part, ready to lend the assistance of her art to the embodiment of Kate Verity. When Miss Kate Rorke revived this play in 1900 one saw the qualities in the piece which had appealed to Mrs Kendal. Miss Rorke's was a performance instinct with charm, and of a restrained intensity in the more strenuous scenes. It reminded one a little of her Lady Bountiful. Miss Rorke was the Leslie, too, in *The Profligate*, a tender, touching, girlish figure. But it is to actresses of a more versatile talent than Miss Rorke's

that Mr Pinero has been of most service. *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* made Mrs Campbell's reputation. *The Gay Lord Quex* set the seal upon Miss Irene Vanbrugh's patent of superiority, and placed her definitely in the front rank. Miss Winifred Emery has never done anything so good as her Theo Fraser in *The Benefit of the Doubt.* Miss Emery has, unfortunately, never had another part in a Pinero play. Nor has Mr Cyril Maude, who caught so exactly the spirit of Cayley Drummle and who played Sir Fletcher Portwood with so exquisite a sense of character and humour, ever been enlisted again under Mr Pinero's command. As a rule one success of this kind leads to others. Mrs Campbell followed up Paula Tanqueray with her exceedingly clever performance in *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith.* Miss Irene Vanbrugh had proved herself in *Trelawny* before she made her great hit as Sophy Fullgarney. Mrs Kendal, too,

was faithful to the author who had given her so fine an opportunity in *The Squire.* It is true that not even her brilliant ability could put life into *The Weaker Sex*, but her Mrs Jermyn, in *The Hobby-Horse*, was a performance that dwells in the memory. Take Miss Fay Davis for another example of the actresses who have never found their *métier* so truly as in Mr Pinero's drama. Never has Miss Davis made so deep an impression, never has she acted better than in *The Princess and the Butterfly.* The reason must be that Fay Zuliani is a real person, a distinct individuality, standing well out in the mind as someone we have known and studied, whereas most of Miss Davis's other parts have been mere stock stage types, shadowy and incorporeal. These sentences were written before *Iris* was produced. Miss Davis failed in that because the part was altogether beyond her powers.

Turning from actresses to actors, the one who detaches himself from the rest as the player to whom Mr Pinero has given the greatest number of chances is surely Mr John Hare. Think of Mr Hare as the good-hearted, irascible Spencer Jermyn; recall the charming touch-and-go manner of his Roderick Heron; pass in review the cleverly differentiated types of aristocratic *roué* which he offered in the parts of Lord Dangars, the Duke of St Olpherts and the Marquis of Quex. Mr Hare's method in acting has, indeed, much in common with Mr Pinero's method in play-writing. It is neat, incisive, fined down to a sharp point and a delicate edge. It aims just a shade more at effect than at nature. The actor has always perfect command over himself; the playwright never seems to let his emotions break a certain bound. By both, in short, emotions appear rather to be regarded as playthings, or as means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves;

neither seems inclined to treat them very seriously. In author and actor alike we mark the qualities proper to the polished, observant, rather cynical man of the world. We could never imagine Mr Hare tearing passions to tatters, or splitting the ears of the groundlings, any more than we could figure to ourselves Mr Pinero's eye in a fine frenzy rolling, or Mr Pinero's pen running away with him and inditing rhapsodies of passion or mysticism. It is no wonder that such an affinity of spirit should have brought playwright and player together, or that such a partnership should have yielded such excellent results.

Next to Mr Hare in the category of those actors who have shone especially in Mr Pinero's characters come Mr Edward Terry, Mr Arthur Cecil, Mr John Clayton, and, perhaps, Mr Weedon Grossmith. Has there ever been a Mr Posket quite like Mr Cecil, or a Dean of St Marvell's in all respects so unimpeachably clerical and so irresistibly

funny as Mr Clayton? It may be that distance lends enchantment to the memory of the old playgoer. But we may safely say that the characters have never been played better. When *Dandy Dick* was revived in 1900, Mr Alfred Bishop was certainly a delightful Dean, suave and dignified and simple-minded. It seemed unkind to hint that Mr Clayton got more out of the part, and yet, and yet— As for the Blore of the revival, it could not be put anywhere near the inimitable Blore of Mr Cecil—the Blore of cherubic countenance and deep underhand cunning, portliest and rosiest of Deanery butlers, most abandoned of gambling manservants. And Mr Cecil's Vere Queckett, too, what a naughty little boy of a man, full of a childlike gamesomeness, an infantile *insouciance*. What a delicious contrast, with his inbred politeness and delicacy of manner, to the noisy, outspoken Admiral of Mr Clayton, the very embodiment of all that we have agreed to

denote by the useful adjective "bluff." As the Cabinet Minister again, who could have hit off Sir Julian Twombley's peculiarities with so light a hand as Mr Cecil? have played the flute with an air of such melancholy enjoyment, or have endured public and private tribulations with so resigned a fortitude? Only so long-suffering a husband could have endured so irrepressible a wife as Lady Twombley became in the hands of Mrs John Wood. The English stage lost a notable pair of comic actors when Mr Clayton and Mr Cecil died.

Of Mr Edward Terry it is difficult to think without at the same time remembering Dick Phenyl. Seldom has an actor identified himself so closely with a particular part. What an immense amount of pleasure he has given by his vastly humorous impersonation of the broken-down barrister! How deftly he drew a tear now and again by a pathetic touch among the comicalities of the repentant toper. The part might have been

played in several ways other than that which Mr Terry chose, but he impressed his personality so firmly upon it that his Dick Phenyl always seems to be the real one and those of other actors either imitations or deflections from the true type. Mr Terry in *The Times* again had great opportunities, and made the most of them. Egerton Bompas was a genuine character in his hands. He hit off with a masterly breadth of treatment the frenzied determination of the *parvenu* to succeed in Society, his morbid self-consciousness and fear that the world, as it eddied around him, was thinking of his draper's shops. He caught, too, just the tone of pathos which was needed here and there to win our half-scornful sympathy with Bompas's aspirations, to keep the character human and prevent it from becoming a mere type held up to contempt and ridicule. Of Mr Terry's earlier performances in *The Rocket*, and one or two other of Mr Pinero's 'prentice efforts I cannot speak, but I have

heard them, as the invaluable Baedeker says about hotels, well spoken of.

Mr Weedon Grossmith made such excellent play with the parts of Mr Joseph Lebanon and the Earl of Tweenwayes in *The Amazons* that it has been a disappointment not to see him again in a Pinero play. How capitally the fatuous aristocratic manner of Tweenwayes would have suited Sir Sandford Cleeve! How admirably would Mr Weedon Grossmith's other manner—smug, self-satisfied, underbred—have sat upon Claude Emptage in *The Benefit of the Doubt.* It is true that Mr Aubrey Fitzgerald played Claude to perfection in another way, and upon a method that is, perhaps, nearer to life than Mr Grossmith's —think, too, of Mr Fitzgerald's footman in *Trelawny*—but it would have been interesting to see what Mr Grossmith made of Theo Fraser's absurd brother. Such comparisons as this, between the styles and conceptions of different actors, we miss altogether in London.

If we had a repertory theatre we should soon begin to take, as a community, more interest in acting as an art, for we should see various actors in the same part, and be able to contrast and judge between their renderings as the audience at the Théâtre Français does in Paris. There would be certain parts in the modern drama, just as in the classic drama, in which every actor on his way up the ladder would be anxious to appear, and in which his admirers would wish to see him. Also, we should watch the playing of small parts with more interest when they were in the hands of actors and actresses whose progress we were watching from day-to-day. But I will not digress further upon my *idée fixe*. We must return to Mr Pinero.

In serious parts Mr Pinero's chief exponents amongst actors have been Mr Forbes Robertson and Mr Alexander. Mr Forbes Robertson was just the figure for a Dennis Heron, but he scarcely looked the kind of man who had

led the life of Dunstan Renshaw, nor were his romantic personality and sympathetic method suited to the feebleness and petulance of Lucas Cleeve. Mr Courtenay Thorpe was much better fitted to give a convincing version of Agnes Ebbsmith's weak-natured lover. Mr Alexander showed a capacity for self-sacrifice rare among actor-managers when he cast himself for Aubrey Tanqueray. He certainly played the part well, as well perhaps as it could be played, but he gained little of the distinction which actor-managers are reputed to covet. In *The Princess and the Butterfly* he had a better chance, and his portrait of the man who is afraid of middle age was sketched with humour and a grasp of what small amount of character Sir George Lamorant was allowed to exhibit. It was throughout a pleasant performance, and in the scenes with Fay Zuliani there was a pretty note of tenderness. A grand passion was scarcely suggested, but then love-making on the

English stage seems bound to be of the cup and saucer variety—it can be done in the intervals of afternoon tea. Mr Herbert Waring was a dignified, earnest Noel Brice many years ago, and lent the same strenuous air, which was in those days his speciality, to the part of the young man in *The Cabinet Minister* who has no patience with the ways and manners of the polite world. Mr Oscar Asche made a consistent and impressive study of Maldonado in *Iris*, and Mr Dion Boucicault gave a finished little sketch of Croker, which was of service to the play just as his eccentric old Vice-Chancellor was valuable in the representation of Trelawny. Mr Fred Kerr is another actor with a talent for neat characterisation whom Mr Pinero has provided with several good opportunities. His Horace Vale, his Bream in *Sweet Lavender*, his Major Tarvey and his Litterly were all performances that one can recall distinctly and with recollections of enjoyment. Miss

Rose Leclercq left no actress behind her, when her death bereft our stage of so bright an ornament, who could rival her in parts of the *grande dame* order. Her Lady Castlejordan in *The Amazons* was a finished performance, abounding in delightfully rich humour and in touches of moving pathos when the scene called for a deeper note. Equally good in its way was her Mrs Cloys, the capable, practical woman of the world, a Mrs Proudie of later date, with much less of the hard, domineering qualities of a traditional bishop's wife than Trollope's character.

The pleasure which a retrospect like this can give to the hardened playgoer is a sure proof of the notable qualities of Mr Pinero's drama. You can think over his characters long after you have seen them embodied on the stage without feeling that they were merely children of fancy. You chuckle over their eccentricities, think kindly of their foibles, recall their generous words

and deeds with softened heart. They dwell, each distinct, in the memory. They are genuine creations, not mere *pastiches* of scrappy observation and theatrical effect.

XI

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MR PINERO'S PLAYS

This list is as complete as I can make it so far as London is concerned. To include even notable casts in the country, or in America, or in Australia, would fill too many pages. The writing of accurate theatrical history is made difficult by the absence of any regular record of productions. I have had to hunt through many files to get some of these names, and often the result did not seem worth so much time and trouble. However, I have persevered, and I have had much help from Mr Pinero's secretary, Mr F. A. Besant Rice, for which I am exceedingly grateful, and here the list is. I hope it will be useful. Anyone who can help me to amend or extend it may be

assured beforehand of my thankful readiness to accept suggestions. I have not attempted to include all revivals—only those of special interest.

TWO HUNDRED A YEAR

GLOBE THEATRE, *October* 1877

Jack Meadows	Mr F. H. Macklin
Mrs Meadows	Miss Compton
Lawyer's Clerk	Mr Bradbury

TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME

LYCEUM THEATRE, 1877

Acted by Mr Archer, Mr Lyons, Mr Pinero himself, and Miss Sedley.

DAISY'S ESCAPE

LYCEUM THEATRE, *September* 1879

Augustus Caddel	Mr Pinero
Tom Rossiter	Mr F. Cooper
Bullamore	Mr Ganthony
Tulk	Mr Tapping
Major Mullet	Mr C. Cooper
Molly	Miss Harwood
Daisy White	Miss Alma Murray

HESTER'S MYSTERY

FOLLY (afterwards TOOLE'S) THEATRE, *June* 1880

Mr Owen Silverdale	Mr H. Westland
John Royle	Mr Joseph Carne
Joel	Mr G. Shelton
Nance Butterworth	Miss Eliza Johnstone
Hester	Miss Effie Liston

BYGONES

LYCEUM THEATRE, *September* 1880

The Hon. Curzon Gramshawe .	Mr Elwood
The Rev. Giles Horncastle . .	Mr Carter
Professor Giacomo Mazzoni . .	Mr Pinero
Bella	Miss Moreley
Ruby	Miss Alma Murray

THE MONEY-SPINNER

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *November* 1880

Lord Kingussie . . .	Mr Kendal
Baron Croodle . .	Mr Hare
Harold Boycott . . .	Mr John Clayton
Jules Faubert . . .	Mr Mackintosh
A Porter	Mr De Verney
Millicent Boycott . . .	Mrs Kendal
Dorinda Croodle . . .	Miss Kate Phillips
Margot	Mrs Gaston Murray

IMPRUDENCE

FOLLEY'S THEATRE, *July* 1881

Coxe Dalrymple, C.B. . .	Mr Clifford Cooper
Captain Rattlefish, R.N. . .	Mr A. Wood
Parminter Blake . . .	Mr Edward Righton
George Castleton . . .	Mr Leonard Boyne
Barnes Durant . . .	Mr Carton
Doby	Mr Redwood
Mrs Parminter Blake . .	Miss Compton
Zaida Dalrymple . . .	Miss Kate Bishop
Lazenby	Miss Emily Miller
Mattie	Miss Laura Linden

THE SQUIRE

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *December* 1881

The Rev. Paul Dormer	Mr Hare
Lieutenant Thorndike	Mr Kendal
Gilbert Hythe	Mr Herbert Waring
Gunnion	Mr Mackintosh
Izod Haggerston	Mr Charles Burleigh
Fell	Mr Sims
Robjohns, Junior	Mr E. Hendrie
The Representative of *The Pagley Mercury*	Mr Branscombe
Kate Verity	Mrs Kendal
Christiana Haggerston	Miss Rose Murray
Felicity Gunnion	Miss Blanche Horlock

GIRLS AND BOYS

TOOLE'S THEATRE, *October* 1882

Solomon Protheroe	Mr J. L. Toole
Josiah Papworth	Mr John Billington
Murch	Mr G. Shelton
Mark Avory	Mr E. D. Ward
Joe Barfield	Mr E. W. Garden
Billy Sunnocks	Master Solomons
Susie Tidby	Miss Nelly Lyons
Honor	Miss Eliza Johnstone
Jenny Kibble	Miss Ely Kimpster
Gillian West	Miss Myra Holme (now Mrs A. W. Pinero)

THE RECTOR

COURT THEATRE, *March* 1883

The Rev. Humphrey Sharland	Mr John Clayton
Dr Oliver Fulljames	Mr H. Kemble
Captain Jesmond Ryle	Mr A. Elwood

Connor Hennessy	Mr Arthur Cecil
Mr Hockaday	Mr Mackintosh
Octavius (his son)	Master Phillips
Mr Gilks	Mr A. Trent
Mr Voss	Mr Milles
Saul Mash	Mr Philip Day
Tony	Mr Maurice
Hope Hennessy	Miss Marion Terry
Sally Brotherhood	Miss Kate Rorke

LORDS AND COMMONS

HAYMARKET THEATRE, *November* 1883

Earl of Caryl	Mr Forbes-Robertson
Lord Percy Lewiscourt	Mr C. Brookfield
Sir George Parnacott, M.D.	Mr Elliott
Tom Jervoise	Mr Bancroft
Mr Smee	Mr Alfred Bishop
Mr Chadd	Mr Girardot
Mr Tredger	Mr Albert Sims
Pressenger	Mr Percy Vernon
Countess of Caryl	Mrs Stirling
Lady Nell	Miss Calhoun
Mrs Devenish	Mrs Bernard-Beere
Miss Maplebeck	Mrs Bancroft

THE ROCKET

GAIETY THEATRE, *December* 1883

The Chevalier Walkinshaw	Mr Edward Terry
Lord Leadenhall	Mr J. W. Adams
John Mable	Mr M. Kinghorne
Joslyn Hammersmith	Mr H. C. Sidney
Clement (Waiter at the "Belle Vue")	Mr F. Martineau
Chatwood (Waiter at the "Lord Gordon")	Mr C. Amalia

Lady Hammersmith	Miss Maria Jones
Rosaline Fabre Quette	Miss Ethel Castleton
Florence	Miss F. Sutherland
Georgette	Miss A. Aubrey
Bingle	Miss E. Maribel

LOW WATER

GLOBE THEATRE, *January* 1884

Lord George Ormolu	Mr Charles Cartwright
Mr Vereker, Q.C.	Mr Carton
Captain Todhunter	Mr R. Dartrey
Mr Algernon Linklater	Mr J. F. Young
Josey	Mr E. Hamilton Bell
Dicky Smallpage	Mr J. L. Shine
The Chevalier Adolphe Victorin de Montfallet	Mr Charles A. Smily
Mr Dottridge	Mr T. Squire
The Rev. Cyril Charlesworthy	Mr Frank Evans
Dr Medwin	Mr Harry Leigh
Mr Passmore	Mr Richardson
Skilliter	Mr E. W. Gardiner
Sloman	Mr Albert Chevalier
"Gas Light & Coke Co."	Mr W. Guise
Anne ("The Major")	Miss Compton
Rosamond ("The Beauty")	Miss Abington
Miss Butterworth	Miss Maria Daly

THE IRONMASTER (*after* "*Le Maître de Forges*," *by Georges Ohnet*)

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *May* 1884

Duc de Bligny	Mr Henley
Octave	Mr Geo. Alexander
Baron de Préfont	Mr H. Waring
Philippe Derblay	Mr Kendal
General de Pontac	Mr Brandon
Moulinet	Mr J. F. Young

Bechelin	Mr J. Maclean
Dr Servan	Mr A. Knight
Old Gobert	Mr R. Cathcart
Young Gobert	Mr Day
Mouchot	Mr Daniels
Servant of the Marquise	Mr De Verney
Servant of Philippe Derblay	Mr T. Lovell
Marquise de Beaupré	Mrs Gaston Murray
Baronne de Préfont	Miss Linda Dietz
Claire de Beaupré	Mrs Kendal
Athénaïs	Miss Vane
Suzanne Derblay	Miss Webster
Brigette	Miss Turtle

IN CHANCERY

GAIETY THEATRE, *December* 1884

Montague Joliffe	Mr Edward Terry
Captain Dionysius M'Cafferty	Mr Alfred Bishop
Dr Titus	Mr Laye
Mr Hinxman	Mr John Dallas
Mr Buzzard	Mr Guise
Mr Gawge	Mr Sherrard
John	Mr Lyndal
Mrs Smith	Miss Phyllis Broughton
Mrs Marmaduke Jackson	Miss Gladys Homfrey
Patricia M'Cafferty	Miss Maria Jones
Amelia Ann Buzzard	Miss Oliver
Walker	Miss Emma Broughton
Kittles	Miss Clara Jecks

REVIVAL

TERRY'S THEATRE, *November* 1890

Montague Joliffe	Mr Edward Terry
Captain Dionysius M'Cafferty	Mr Julian Cross
Dr Titus (his medical attendant)	Mr F. W. Irish
Mr Hinxman (a detective)	Mr Prince Miller

John (Mrs Smith's servant)	Mr Henry Dana
Mr Buzzard (a butcher)	Mr Robert Soutar
Mr Gawge (a draper)	Mr Geo. Belmore
Mrs Smith	Miss Elinor Leyshon
Mrs Marmaduke Jackson	Miss Alice Yorke
Patricia M'Cafferty	Miss Kate Mills
Amelia Ann Buzzard	Miss Jessie Danvers
Walker (Mrs Smith's maid)	Miss Violet Armbruster
Kittles	Miss Rose Dearing

THE MAGISTRATE

COURT THEATRE, *March* 1885

Mr Posket	Mr Arthur Cecil
Mr Bullamy	Mr Fred Cape
Colonel Lukyn	Mr John Clayton
Captain Horace Vale	Mr F. Kerr
Cis Farringdon	Mr H. Eversfield
Achille Blond	Mr Albert Chevalier
Isidore	Mr Deane
Mr Wormington	Mr Gilbert Trent
Inspector Messiter	Mr Albert Sims
Sergeant Lugg	Mr Lugg
Constable Harris	Mr Burnley
Wyke	Mr Fayre
Agatha Posket	Mrs John Wood
Charlotte	Miss Marion Terry
Beatie Tomlinson	Miss Norreys
Popham	Miss La Coste

MAYFAIR (*adapted from "Maison Neuve," by Sardou*)

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *October* 1885

Lord Sulgrave	Mr Cartwright
Captain Marcus Jekyll	Mr Brookfield
Nicholas Barrable	Mr Hare
Geoffrey Roydart	Mr Kendal

Mr Perricarp	Mr Maclean
Mr Jowett	Mr Hendrie
Rudolph Rufford	Mr Elwood
Andrew Moorcroft	Mr H. Reeves Smith
Mr Cashew	Mr Paget
Ogilvy	Mr W. T. Lovell
Agnes	Mrs Kendal
Edna	Miss Webster
Hilda Ray	Miss Fanny Enson
Priscilla	Mrs Gaston Murray
Louison	Miss Linda Dietz

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

COURT THEATRE, *March* 1886

The Hon. Vere Queckett	Mr Arthur Cecil
Rear-Admiral Archibald Rankling, C.B.	Mr John Clayton
Lieut. John Mallory	Mr F. Kerr
Mr Saunders	Mr Edwin Victor
Mr Reginald Paulover	Mr H. Eversfield
Mr Otto Bernstein	Mr Chevalier
Tyler	Mr W. Phillips
Goff	Mr Fred Cape
Jaffray	Mr Lugg
Mrs Rankling	Miss Emily Cross
Miss Dyott	Mrs John Wood
Dinah	Miss Cudmore
Gwendoline Hawkins	Miss Viney
Ermyntrude Johnson	Mis La Coste
Peggy Hesslerigge	Miss Norreys
Jane Chipman	Miss Roche

THE HOBBY-HORSE

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *October* 1886

The Rev. Noel Brice	Mr Herbert Waring
Mr Spencer Jermyn	Mr Hare
Mr Pinching	Mr C. W. Somerset

Mr Shattock	Mr Mackintosh
Mr Pews	Mr Hendrie
Mr Lyman	Mr W. M. Cathcart
Mr Moulter	Mr Thomas
Tom Clark	Mr Fuller Mellish
Hewett	Mr Albert Sims
Tiny Landon	Master Reid
Mrs Spencer Jermyn	Mrs Kendal
Mrs Porcher	Mrs Gaston Murray
Miss Moxon	Mrs Beerbohm Tree
Bertha	Miss Webster
Mrs Landon	Miss Huntley

DANDY DICK

COURT THEATRE, *January* 1887

The Very Rev. Augustin Jedd, D.D.	Mr John Clayton
Sir Tristram Mardon, Bart.	Mr Edmund Maurice
Major Tarvey	Mr F. Kerr
Mr Darbey	Mr H. Eversfield
Blore	Mr Arthur Cecil
Noah Topping	Mr W. H. Denny
Hatcham	Mr W. Lugg
Georgina Tidman	Mrs John Wood
Salome	Miss Marie Lewes
Sheba	Miss Norreys
Hannah Topping	Miss Laura Linden

REVIVAL

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE, *February* 1900

The Dean	Mr Alfred Bishop
Sir Tristram	Mr Edmund Maurice
Major Tarvey	Mr A. Vane-Tempest
Mr Darbey	Mr Stanley Cooke
Blore	Mr George Giddens
Noah Topping	Mr W. H. Denny
Hatcham	Mr A. E. George

Georgina Tidman . .	Miss Violet Vanbrugh
Salome	Miss Maud Hoffman
Sheba	Miss Grace Lane
Hannah Topping . .	Miss Annie Hughes

SWEET LAVENDER

TERRY'S THEATRE, *March* 1888

Geoffrey Wedderburn . .	Mr Brandon Thomas
Clement Hale . . .	Mr Bernard Gould
Dr Delaney . . .	Mr Alfred Bishop
Dick Phenyl . . .	Mr Edward Terry
Horace Bream . . .	Mr F. Kerr
Mr Maw	Mr Sant Matthews
Mr Bulger	Mr T. C. Valentine
Mrs Gilfillian . . .	Miss M. A. Victor
Minnie	Miss Maude Millett
Ruth Rolt	Miss Carlotta Addison
Lavender	Miss Norreys

THE WEAKER SEX

COURT THEATRE, *March* 1889

Lord Gillingham . .	Mr A. W. Denison
Hon. George Liptrott . .	Mr E. Allan Aynesworth
Mr Bargus, M.P. . .	Mr Edward Righton
Captain Jessett . .	Mr A. B. Francis
Dudley Silchester . .	Mr W. H. Vernon
Ira Lee . . .	Mr Kendal
Mr Hawley Hill . .	Mr W. Newall
Mr Wade Green . .	Mr Eric Lewis
Spencer (servant at Lord Gillingham's) . . .	Mr H. Deane
Lady Gillingham . .	Miss Violet Vanbrugh
Lady Liptrott . . .	Miss Patty Chapman
Lady Struddock . .	Miss E. Mathews

Lady Vivash . . .	Mrs Kendal
Sylvia (her daughter) . .	Miss Annie Hughes
Mrs Hawley Hill . .	Miss Trevor Bishop
Mrs Boyle-Chewton . .	Miss Fanny Coleman
Rhoda (her daughter) . .	Miss Olga Brandon
Miss Cardelloe . . .	Miss Blanche Ellice
Petch (servant at Mrs Boyle-Chewton's) . .	Miss C. Lucie

THE PROFLIGATE

GARRICK THEATRE, *April* 1889

Lord Dangars . . .	Mr John Hare
Dunstan Renshaw . .	Mr Forbes-Robertson
Hugh Murray . . .	Mr Lewis Waller
Wilfred Brudenell . .	Mr S. Brough
Mr Cheal	Mr Dodsworth
Ephgraves . . .	Mr R. Cathcart
Weaver	Mr H. Knight
Mrs Stonehay . . .	Mrs Gaston Murray
Leslie Brudenell . . .	Miss Kate Rorke
Irene	Miss Beatrice Lamb
Janet	Miss Olga Nethersole
Priscilla	Miss Caldwell

THE CABINET MINISTER

COURT THEATRE, *April* 1890

Earl of Drumdurris . .	Mr Richard Saunders
Viscount Aberbrothock .	(An Infant in arms)
Right Hon. Sir Julian Twombley, G.C.M.G., M.P. .	Mr Arthur Cecil
Brooke Twombley . .	Mr E. Allan Aynesworth
Macphail of Ballocheevin .	Mr Brandon Thomas
Mr Joseph Lebanon . .	Mr Weedon Grossmith

Valentine White	Mr Herbert Waring
Mr Mitford (subsequently changed to Melton)	Mr Frank Farren
The Munkittrick	Mr John Clulow
Probyn	Mr Ernest Paton
Dowager Countess of Drumdurris	Miss R. G. Le Thière
Lady Euphemia Vibart	Miss Isabel Ellissen
Countess of Drumdurris	Miss Eva Moore
Lady Twombley	Mrs John Wood
Imogen	Miss Florence Tanner
Lady Macphail	Mrs Edmund Phelps
Hon. Mrs Gaylustre	Miss Rosina Filippi
Angèle	Miss Marianne Caldwell
Miss Munkittrick	Miss Florence Harrington

LADY BOUNTIFUL

GARRICK THEATRE, *March* 1891

Sir Lucian Brent, Bart.	Mr Gilbert Hare
Sir Richard Philliter, Q.C.	Mr C. W. Somerset
Roderick Heron	Mr John Hare
Dennis Heron	Mr J. Forbes-Robertson
John Veale	Mr Charles Groves
Pedgrift	Mr R. Cathcart
Wimple	Mr John Byron
Floyce	Mr R. Power
A Villager	Mr Henry Rivers
Miss Brent	Miss Carlotta Addison
Camilla Brent	Miss Kate Rorke
Beatrix Brent	Miss Beatrice Ferrar
Mrs Veale	Miss Dolores Drummond
Margaret Veale	Miss Marie Linden
Mrs Hodnutt (a pew opener)	Miss Caroline Elton
Amelia	Miss Webster
A Villager	Miss E. Turtle

THE TIMES

TERRY'S THEATRE, *October* 1891

Denham, Viscount Lurgashall	Mr W. T. Lovell
Hon. Montague Trimble	Mr Elliott
Percy Egerton-Bompas, M.P.	Mr Edward Terry
Howard	Mr Henry V. Esmond
Timothy M'Shane, M.P.	Mr Fred Thorne
Jelf	Mr Albert Sims
Countess of Ripstow	Miss M. Talbot
Mrs Egerton-Bompas	Miss Fanny Brough
Beryl	Miss Annie Hill
Mrs Hooley	Miss Alexis Leighton
Honoria	Miss Barradell
Miss Cazalet	Miss Helena Dacre
Lucy Tuck	Miss Hetty Dene

THE AMAZONS

COURT THEATRE, *March* 1893

Earl of Tweenwayes	Mr Weedon Grossmith
Viscount Litterly	Mr F. Kerr
Count de Grival	Mr Elliott
The Rev. Roger Minchin	Mr J. Beauchamp
Fitton	Mr W. Quinton
Youatt	Mr Compton Coutts
Orts	Mr R. Nainby
Marchioness of Castlejordan	Miss Rose Leclercq
Lady Noeline Belturbet	Miss Lily Hanbury
Lady Wilhelmina Belturbet	Miss Ellaline Terriss
Lady Thomasin Belturbet	Miss Pattie Browne
"Sergeant" Shuter	Miss Marianne Caldwell

THE SECOND MRS TANQUERAY

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *May* 1893

Aubrey Tanqueray	Mr George Alexander
Paula	Mrs Patrick Campbell

Ellean	Miss Maude Millett
Cayley Drummle . . .	Mr Cyril Maude
Mrs Cortelyon . . .	Miss Amy Roselle
Captain Hugh Ardale . .	Mr Ben Webster
Gordon Jayne, M.D. . .	Mr Murray Hathorn
Frank Misquith, Q.C., M.P. .	Mr Nutcombe Gould
Sir George Orreyed, Bart. .	Mr A. Vane-Tempest
Lady Orreyed . . .	Miss Edith Chester
Morse	Mr Alfred Holles

REVIVAL

ROYALTY THEATRE, *September* 1901

Aubrey Tanqueray .	Mr G. S. Titheradge
Cayley Drummle .	Mr George Arliss
Captain Hugh Ardale .	Mr Gerald du Maurier
Gordon Jayne . .	Mr J. W. Macdonald
Frank Misquith, Q.C., M.P. . .	Mr Caleb Porter
Sir George Orreyed .	Mr Arthur Bromley-Davenport
Morse . . .	Mr Sydney Laurence
Paula . . .	Mrs Patrick Campbell
Ellean . . .	Miss Winifred Fraser
Mrs Cortelyon . .	Miss Katharine Stewart
Lady Orreyed . .	Miss Rose Dupré

THE NOTORIOUS MRS EBBSMITH

GARRICK THEATRE, *March* 1895

Duke of St Olpherts . .	Mr John Hare
Sir Sandford Cleeve . .	Mr Ian Robertson
Lucas Cleeve . . .	Mr Forbes-Robertson
Rev. Amos Winterfield . .	Mr C. Aubrey Smith
Sir George Brodrick . .	Mr Joseph Carne
Dr Kirke	Mr Fred Thorne
Fortuné	Mr Gerald du Maurier

Antonio Peppi	Mr C. F. Caravoglia
Agnes	Mrs Patrick Campbell
Gertrude Thorpe	Miss Ellis Jeffreys
Sybil Cleeve	Miss Eleanor Calhoun
Nella	Miss Mary Halsey
Hepzibah	Mrs Charles Groves

REVIVAL

ROYALTY THEATRE, *February* 1901

Agnes	Mrs Patrick Campbell
Lucas Cleeve	Mr Courtenay Thorpe
Sybil Cleeve	Miss Beryl Faber
Sir Sandford Cleeve	Mr Gerald du Maurier
Duke of St Olpherts	Mr George Arliss
Gertrude Thorpe	Miss Winifred Fraser
The Rev. Amos Winterfield	Mr Berte Thomas
Sir George Brodrick	Mr Howard Sturge
Dr Kirke	Mr F. W. Permain
Fortuné	Mr Burton
Antonio Peppi	Mr Vincent
Nella	Miss Italia Conti
Hepzibah	Miss Leila Repton

THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

COMEDY THEATRE, *October* 1895

Mrs Emptage	Miss Henrietta Lindley
Claude Emptage	Mr Aubrey Fitzgerald
Justina Emptage	Miss Esmé Beringer
Theophila Fraser	Miss Winifred Emery
Sir Fletcher Portwood, M.P.	Mr Cyril Maude
Mrs Cloys	Miss Rose Leclercq
Rt. Rev. Anthony Cloys, D.D., Bishop of St Olpherts	Mr Ernest Cosham
Alexander Fraser ("Fraser of Locheen")	Mr J. G. Grahame

John Allingham	Mr Leonard Boyne
Denzil Shafto	Mr J. W. Pigott
Peter Elphick	Mr Stuart Champion
Horton	Mr Mules Browne
Quaife	Mr J. Byron
Olive Allingham	Miss Lily Hanbury
Mrs Quinton Twelves	Miss Eva Williams

THE PRINCESS AND THE BUTTERFLY

ST JAMES'S THEATRE, *March* 1897

Sir George Lamorant, Bart.	Mr George Alexander
Edward Oriel	Mr H. B. Irving
Mr St Roche	Mr H. V. Esmond
Lieut.-Col. Arthur Eave	Mr C. Aubrey Smith
Hon. Charles Denstroude	Mr Ivo Dawson
Sir James Velleret, M.P.	Mr R. Dalton
Mr Adrian Mylls	Mr George Bancroft
Mr Bartley Levan	Mr Gerald Gurney
Mr Percival Ord	Mr A Vane-Tempest
Maxime Demailly	Mr Arthur Royston
Major-General Sir Robert Chichele, K.C.B.	Mr H. H. Vincent
Count Vladislaus Reviczky	Mr S. Hamilton
General Yanokoff	Mr Richards
Kara Pasha	Mr Robert Soutar
Col. the Hon. Reginald Ughbrook, C.B.	Mr C. Stafford
Faulding	Mr A. W. Munro
Princess Pannonia	Miss Julia Neilson
Mrs Marsh	Mrs Kemmis
Annis Marsh	Miss Dorothy Hammond
Lady Ringstead	Miss Rose Leclercq
Lady Chichele	Miss Pattie Bell
Mrs Sabiston	Mrs Cecil Raleigh
Mrs St Roche	Miss Granville
Blanche Oriel	Miss M. Hackney

Mrs Ware . . .	Miss Julie Opp
Madame Yanokoff . .	Miss Ellen Standing
Mrs Ughbrook . . .	Miss Leila Repton
Catherine . . .	Miss Eleanor Aickin
Fay Zuliani . . .	Miss Fay Davis

TRELAWNY OF THE "WELLS"

COURT THEATRE, *January* 1898

Theatrical Folk

James Telfer . . .	Mr Athol Forde
Augustus Colpoys . .	Mr E. M. Robson
Ferdinand Gadd . . .	Mr Gerald du Maurier
Tom Wrench . . .	Mr Paul Arthur
Mrs Telfer (Miss Violet Sylvester)	Mrs E. Saker
Avonia Bunn . . .	Miss Pattie Browne
Rose Trelawny . . .	Miss Irene Vanbrugh
Imogen Parrott . . .	Miss Hilda Spong
O'Dwyer	Mr Richard Purdon
Members of the Company of the Pantheon Theatre . .	Mr Vernon, Mr Foster, Mr Milton, and Miss Baird
Hall-keeper at the Pantheon .	Mr W. H. Quinton

Non-theatrical Folk

Vice-Chancellor Sir William Gower, Kt. . . .	Mr Dion Boucicault
Arthur Gower, Clara de Fœnix } his grandchildren	Mr James Erskine, Miss Eva Williams
Miss Trafalgar Gower . .	Miss Isabel Bateman
Captain de Fœnix . .	Mr Sam Sothern
Mrs Mossop . . .	Miss Le Thière
Mr Ablott . . .	Mr Fred Thorne
Charles	Mr Aubrey Fitzgerald
Sarah	Miss Polly Emery

THE GAY LORD QUEX

GLOBE THEATRE, *April* 1899

The Marquis of Quex . .	Mr John Hare
Sir Chichester Frayne (Governor of Uumbos, West Coast of Africa) . . .	Mr Gilbert Hare
Captain Bastling . .	Mr Charles Cherry
"Valma," otherwise Frank Pollitt (a professional palmist) .	Mr Frank Gillmore
The Duchess of Strood .	Miss Fortescue
Julia, Countess of Owbridge .	Miss Fanny Coleman
Mrs Jack Eden . .	Miss Mona K. Oram
Muriel Eden (her sister-in-law)	Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis
Sophy Fullgarney (a manicurist)	Miss Irene Vanbrugh
Miss Moon . . .	Miss Laura M'Gilvray
Miss Huddle . . .	Miss Doris Templeton
Miss Claridge . . .	Miss Victoria Addison
Miss Limbird . . .	Miss Marion Dolby
A young Lady and other patrons of Miss Fullgarney . . .	Miss K. Carpenter, Mrs Copleston, Miss B. Coleman, Mr Richard Lambart, and Mr Hubert Evelyn
Servants at Fauncey Court .	Mr Abbot and Mr Lennox

IRIS

GARRICK THEATRE, *September* 1901

Frederick Maldonado .	Mr Oscar Asche
Laurence Trenwith .	Mr Charles Bryant
Croker Harrington .	Mr Dion Boucicault
Archibald Kane . .	Mr Jerrold Robertshaw
Colonel Wynning .	Mr Bayntun
Servant at Mrs Bellamy's	Mr Sims
Servant at the Villa Prigno	Mr Thomas

Iris Bellamy . .	Miss Fay Davis
Fanny Sylvain . .	Miss Beryl Faber
Aurea Vyse . . .	Miss Nora Lancaster
Mrs Wynning . .	Miss Repton
Miss Pinsent . .	Mrs Maesmore Morris
Women-servants .	Miss Deane and Miss Francis

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